THE TRAGIC FALLACY, SO-CALLED

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I

MODERN serious drama is mean and depressing, declared Mr. Krutch a few years ago, in a depressing though high-minded essay;[1] and there was and still is some reason for his judgment. Ibsen, by his genius, rises above his contemporaries, but in comparison with his peers or betters before him he presents uninspiring situations and unsympathetic souls within them. These have not the sweetness or the greatness of poetry. Male and female alike, they are not, as the Shakespearean and Hellenic figures are, blessed with an imagination that comprehends the world about them or their own experience; nor are they richly dowered with virtue or its dramatic equivalent, largeness of life. His leading male characters—like Mr. Krutch, I do not call them heroes—have something of the coward, the flincher or deserter in them, witness Bernick, Borkman, Peer Gynt, and Solness, and at the same time, of the trampling, devouring egoist; or they are meddling, floundering idealists, such as Allmers and Gregers Werle; hypocrites, such as Helmer in *The Doll's House*; sentimentalists, such as young Ekdal in *The Wild Duck*; or victims of degeneracy or disease, such as Oswald in *Ghosts*. Most of his leading women are deficient in charm if not in virtue; and the murderesses Hedda, Rebecca, and the Empress Helena are not naïve or impulsive but scheming and calculating. It is the minor figures, like Little Eyolf, Hedvig in *The Wild*

[1] "The Tragic Fallacy" (*Atlantic Monthly*, Nov., 1928).

Duck, and Hilda in *The Master Builder* (in the creation of whom the dramatist shakes off the burden of ethics or psychology) that are attractive or appealing; the chief figures on his stage are mostly the worse for the wear,—grim and ungracious, bad-mannered and forbidding, the interest lying in the situation, whether external or internal, in the character as a study, not as an object of our affection or admiration. And that is the direct opposite of what we find in Shakespeare, despite the greater coarseness and crudity of deportment in Elizabethan life, somewhat reflected in the drama. On an anxious sympathy, not an excited curiosity, Elizabethan and ancient tragedy depends.[2]

What, then, shall we say of other modern serious plays, English and French, German or Spanish? If the characters are often more attractive, they are seldom more noble; if the situations are less ugly, they are seldom so intense. The English drama is the most familiar; and let the reader summon up in memory Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and *Iris*, *The Thunderbolt* and *Mid-Channel*, sordid stories every one. The leading women are, however attractive, frail and shallow creatures, and the men with whom thay have to do are given even less virtue or distinction. The serious situations do not rise to the level of tragedy. The evil deeds are petty or ignoble, or are done in such a spirit. "The pleasurable excitement of the emotions is the end and aim of tragedy;" but there are scenes, as in *The Thunderbolt*, where the pleasure is conspicuously lacking, the shame of the character for her own misdemeanour—the destruction of a will—being fully shared by the audience and eliciting not much more sympathy in their bosoms than in that of the really magnanimous injured

[2]See "The Dramatic Texture in Shakespeare" (*Criterion*, July, 1935).

party on the stage. In O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, *Desire Under the Elms*, and *Mourning Becomes Electra* there is a return to what may be called tragedy, at least so far as the doings of the characters are concerned; they commit crimes above the level of cheating or forgery, and possibly of Æschylean dimensions; but not of Æschylean dignity, and the perpetrators awaken more horror than terror, and pity for the most part only as specimens of the *genus humanum*. Certainly tragedy is now often fairly unrecognizable if our notion of it is only as it was in its prime.

II

Is there a reason for this state of affairs? Mr. Krutch discovers it in our philosophy or in the life that we lead. It is because living is for us so mean and ignoble that our art is such. We bow down under the load of our enlightenment. We have lost faith in God and even in man, and therefore it is impossible for us to make a hero of him on the stage. "We do not write about kings because we do not believe that any man is worthy to be one, and we do not write about courts because hovels seem to us to be dwellings more appropriate to the creatures who inhabit them. . . . We can no longer tell tales of the fall of noble men because we do not believe that noble men exist." The tragic conception has become for us "a fallacy."

There are, I think, several serious defects or shortcomings in the theory. The fundamental one is that the critic fails to remember the principle, which he incidentally, yet explicitly, acknowledges, of art as no mere imitation but a new creation. Since, as is admitted, art is no record, is no document, little or nothing can be proved by it; since art is a reflection of the taste

of the time, not the life of the time, it continually changes; and therefore the Spirit of Art is often, quite as Mr. Binyon finds it, "against the Spirit of the Age." The fact that there are no ideal heroes in the theatre is no definite indication that man has lost faith in God or himself. Against poetic tragedy there has, necessarily, been a great reaction, while in all drama there has been a great decadence; and in England both these changes began even in early Stuart days, in France after those of the *Grand Monarque*, in Germany after Schiller and Goethe, and all long before the age of materialism, scepticism, and general disillusionment which Mr. Krutch, like the rest of us, regrets. Indeed, tragedy such as Mr. Krutch is speaking of, has appeared but rarely on the planet. There have been only five great periods, the Periclean, the Elizabethan, the Bourbon, the seventeenth-century Spanish, and the late eighteenth-century German; and it is no considerable blot on our scutcheon that on the stage there is nothing of the same magnitude appearing now. Mr. Krutch is like Mr. MacEachren[1] (though the latter is less despairing) who, also thinking tragedy quite dependent upon a belief in the dignity of man, labels certain ages as non-tragic, such as those of Marcus Aurelius, the Italian Renaissance, and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these being "naturalistic," not "humanistic" as they really ought to be. Michelangelo, in the Italian Renaissance, he considers "an exception;" but what of Raphael, Leonardo, and the rest of the brilliant company of artists and thinkers, certainly examples of that dignity and no doubt also believers in it, what of Goethe and Schiller, who were also rather notable tragic dramatists, and of

[1] "The Roots of Tragedy" (*The Bookman*, N.Y., April and May, 1930, pp. 129-37).

all the other great and noble personages of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who, though not tragic dramatists, certainly equal in dignity those of the seventeenth (after 1616 at least) who were? This is another instance of the violence done to history and the confusion of literature and life which I have commented upon elsewhere,[2] and of that explanation of literature and other art out of our knowledge of the period which has been criticized by M. Baldensperger, the knowledge being mainly or entirely derived from the literature or art to be explained. More is needed (if indeed in any century it is wanting) than a sense of human dignity or than "humanism," either, for the making of tragedy—not only a free stage but a responsive audience, and, for this last, an evolution of tragedy, a deep-rooted and continuous tradition of conventions in writing and acting, the means of communication between author and audience without which a Sophocles or a Shakespeare could not have been. From the days of Sheridan until the last forty years, there had, on the popular stage in England and America, been no drama, tragedy or comedy either, worthy of consideration; and the recent product, formed on foreign models, has been so far above the heads of the common people that they have not yet developed much of a taste for it. At bottom there is no blame, nor even a satisfactory explanation. Art has its periods, its ups and downs; and these must be recognized, not bewailed.

Moreover, art does not repeat itself. Differences in excellence are no less inevitable than those in kind. Elizabethan tragedy differs, of course, from the ancient, otherwise it would not be Elizabethan; and ours differs from that still more, for reasons not so disparaging to

[2] See my *Shakespeare Studies*, 1927, chap. ii *ff.*

us as Mr. Krutch is disposed to think. The mechanism of Elizabethan tragedy, whereby the noble and ideal action was supported and made acceptable, has long since broken down. A system and rhythm, a contrast and harmony of passions, not a study of character or society; dependent, for effect, on sympathy, not on curiosity, on anticipation, not surprise; as such, tragedy required, and made use of, certain superstitious conceptions, the malignant fate or the villain in league with Hell, ghosts, omens, and forebodings, irony, *hubris*, and nemesis, which are now fairly meaningless, metaphorical, or outworn. Only by external instigation or intervention can Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth come to do their bloody deeds and at heart not remain, as psychology would require, vindictive, jealous, traitorous. Only by those external agencies can they produce their supreme emotional effect, their stark contrast and overpowering impact. It is enlightenment that has cut us off from practising this highly imaginative and artistic though somewhat naïve dramaturgy; but no age could produce or appreciate another Shakespeare or Sophocles any more than it could a Homer or a Dante. And enlightenment, like the fluctuations in art, must not be bewailed. "Panta chorei!"—all things flow, quoth Heracleitus, even before Sophocles; but the ancient, who likewise was contemptuous of his generation, was nicknamed by the cheerful and healthy Greeks "The Weeping Philosopher."

In one respect Mr. Krutch exaggerates the emotional differences between early tragedy and the modern. Neither Hellenic tragedy nor the Elizabethan is so exultant and exhilarating as he makes it out to be, nor is the modern so abject and depressing. The critic is under the sway of Hegel and Bradley, finding in the

earlier tragedy transcendental consolations that transcend even the dramatist's text and purpose; but he ventures farther than Bradley (who says that it does not matter what happens to Cordelia, all that matters is what she is), and he even avows that he "is glad that Juliet dies, and glad that Lear is turned out into the storm." I do not know whether Mr. Krutch twists the comic into the tragic or pathetic, as sentimental criticism has done with Shylock, Falstaff, and Malvolio, not to mention Molière's Harpagon, Dandin, and Arnolphe; but to me it seems a like sort of aesthetic wilfulness or perversity. There is some point, of course, to the remark about Juliet, that tragedy having not inaptly been called a triumphal hymn of love; and for the sake of his argument Mr. Krutch has chosen his examples. He is not glad, is he? (where he has greater need to be) when Cordelia is hanged, Desdemona smothered, Antigone walled up in the rock. If he is, he is thwarting the purpose of the dramatist, turning what the latter has, by every means and resource at his disposal, endeavoured to make a tragedy, a thing wholly of terror and pity, into a nameless something deprived of the dominance and equipoise of both. And, indeed, he goes so far as to declare, contradicting the aim and purport, not to say the very nature of tragedy, that "all works of art which deserve their name have a happy end." Let him point out a single good example in the tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare, to which in a general way he is continually alluding. The only ones of Sophocles that might be cited are the *Philoctetes* and the *Electra*, but in these there is no reason that the hero or the heroine at the end should suffer. In the *Œdipus* and the *Antigone*, after the direst atrocities of nemesis, the consolations offered are in the vein of "call no man

happy until he hath crossed life's border free from pain;" "come, cease lamentation, lift it up no more, for verily these things stand fast;" "reverence towards the gods must be inviolate." As for Shakespeare, who, Mr. Krutch asserts, "justifies the ways of God to man," candid critics, who read him, instead of piously but resolutely remoulding him nearer to the heart's desire, have even complained of the want of reconciliation or consolation, of moral interpretation and adjustment.[3] Like Sophocles he ends, indeed, on a quiet note, a rest-tone; like him he gives a final impression of harmony, not of discord; like him he implies a state of order and solidity, not of chaos, in the normal life to which the surviving characters are returning; but, like him, he never suggests such satisfactions as the memory of the beauty and virtues of those who have suffered and perished. In tragedy it is, as usual in the experience or criticism of art, a question of due proportion and emphasis. Such a memory the spectator or critic should have and keep, but only to break the shock of the tragic current, not to interrupt or divert its trend. He should be affected somewhat indeed like Mr. Krutch, but less definitely and pronouncedly, and more like Mr. Huxley,[4] who finds most fitting expression for his feelings in the lines of Wordsworth:

> Our friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind;

yet thus he should feel only in reaction from the tragedy. By the mere beauty and grandeur of the presentation such a reaction is made possible, his emotions in the end made pleasurable. "The effect of tragedy is not a simple thing," says Mr. Lucas, "but a struggle of opposing

[3] P. H. Frye, "Sophocles and Shakespeare" in *Romance and Tragedy*, 1922.
[4] "Tragedy and the Whole Truth" (*Virginia Quarterly*, 1931, p. 182).

feelings—our sense of the splendour and of the despair of human life."[5] But the spectator is meant to respond to the tragedy—"the tragic pleasure," says Aristotle, "is that of pity and fear,"[6] not of admiration—and the reaction, the rebound, should occur in his own mind, not in the play itself.

In modern serious drama, on the other hand, the ugly, as in *Ghosts* and *The Power of Darkness*, the humble and sordid, as in *The Weavers*, are not, as Mr. Krutch seems to think them, wanton and gratuitous, but really contribute to the aesthetic effect. The tragic muse now flies lower, when it flies at all. I, too, greatly prefer *Macbeth* and *Othello*, as I do a Michelangelo or Raphael to the best up-to-date Paris or Munich artists, who paint harlots, slums, and dump-heaps; but as Hans Christian Andersen said long ago, everyday life has its tragedy. It is a different conception of the *genre* that is now prevailing, which has borne some good fruit and will, no doubt, bear better. It is not that of the fall of princes or of the intrusion of supernatural or alien personages, of great crimes knowingly or unknowingly committed and the nemesis which descends upon them;—in short, not that of a tragedy lifted above ordinary experience, on the wings of poesy high in air; the prevailing conception is that of a tragedy "inhering in the nature of things rather than in the deeds of men"[7] or in men's relation to their physical and social environment, rooted in the earth. Poverty and ugliness, humble and low life, hovels and disease are a part of it, and in the right hands, like Ibsen's, Tolstoi's, and Hauptmann's, are sometimes made to yield situations which nevertheless

[5] F. L. Lucas, *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics*, p. 48.
[6] *Poetics*, chap. xiv.
[7] Ludwig Lewisohn, *Modern Drama*, 1915, p. 6.

elicit pity and terror, as a potentate deposed or wailing in a prison cannot now. A king as somewhat more than an ordinary mortal, in whose mental and physical misery there are keener pathos and irony simply because he is a king, fallen from his high estate, as in Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Richard II*, cannot now move us except as we strain and tax our imaginations. An anointed and sceptred monarch is another bit of tragic furniture, like fate, ghost, and villain, well stored away in the theatrical lumber-room; but are we spiritually or imaginatively much the poorer for that?

III

The chief difficulty, however, with Mr. Krutch's theory lies in his not acknowledging that the less noble and sympathetic quality of our present-day dramatic situations and characters is owing to our regard for probability (or rather actuality) and psychology. "With Shakespeare the villain, with the Greeks Fate, bears the burden. But now that the villain is no longer credible or acceptable, and the cause of the trouble has been seated in the hero himself, it is not so much our smaller opinion of man that makes our modern tragedy mean and depressing as our imperious craving that the presentation of the character shall be real and true. We see, indeed, more clearly that a man bears his fate, or at least the germ of his fatal passion, within him; but we demand that we shall see this in the play."[1] That, and, as we have noticed, the influence of environment, which Shakespeare and the ancients ignored; and thus the most highly emotional situations—at least that are known to us, as in the *Œdipus* and in *Othello*—are no longer attainable. But our art must, naturally enough,

[1]See my *Poets and Playwrights*, 1930, p. 93.

be in keeping with our knowledge, or it will not be ours, or indeed be art; and "though much is taken, much abides," however little of this has as yet, for the purposes of art, been discovered.

That it is the demand for realism, for psychological veracity and circumstantial probability, which makes our modern heroes less appealing, is plain enough when we see how the Elizabethans, when they themselves attempted such effects, abandoned them in the falling action of the play. This is in the "histories," such as Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, where there was little opportunity for the usual mechanism of fate or villain. Of Marlowe it has been said, rather complainingly, that he "hedges," "juggles with the springs of the emotions," in other words, shifts his ground; but the reason for this has not been given. The dramatist undertook to present the hero as the cause, through his folly, of his own misfortune; unlike Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and even Macbeth, he is, as the accepted criticism now demands, made the victim of his own "tragic fault." That conception serves well enough in the earlier part of *Edward II*, while the king is prosperous; there our sympathies are with the misgoverned barons and the neglected queen. But in the latter part the emotions called forth by the king's meeting with his deserts would not be sufficient for Elizabethan tragic purposes. There would be even too much "justice" and "motivation," too little pity or fear, and the effect would be "depressing," or modern. Consequently the queen and Mortimer are made cruel and treacherous as they were not before, and Edward attractive and appealing as he was not before. The hedging or juggling arises perforce when the dramatist drops the psycho-

logical or ethical method; the complaint of the critics arises because they keep their psychological point of view. And what Marlowe did in *Edward II*, Shakespeare, after his own fashion, did in *Richard II*, making the king in his fall manlier, more poetic and eloquent, and arousing for him the sympathy of those subjects who had turned against him. The same he did, towards the end, with Antony and Cleopatra, emphasizing their most generous traits and obscuring their mean and petty ones; and Coriolanus, in the latter part of the play, rising to heights of filial devotion and generosity, loses the testiness and resentfulness prominent in the earlier. Ibsen, on the other hand, in *Borkman* and *Hedda Gabler*, stands stoutly by his psychology, by his logic, draws conclusions only from his premises; but thus almost the only quality in the hero and the heroine that at their end elicits our sympathy or admiration is the pluck with which they seek or meet it. Truer, more rational, Ibsen is less tragic.

IV

"In these days the finest tragedies," says Aristotle, "are always on the story of some few houses, on that of Alcmaeon, Œdipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus, or any others that may have been involved, as either agents or sufferers, in some deed of horror;"[1] and evidently it is such a deed that is the important thing, not the rank of the characters or even the familiarity of the story. Presently the sage declares his preference for such a deed when within the family—murder, or the like, by brother on brother, by son on father, by mother on son, or by son on mother, and done in ignorance. He would have, in short, the most terrible of situations, with little or

[1] *Poetics*, chap. xiii.

nothing in the agent's own character to produce it. The Elizabethan dramatists at their best likewise presented the good and fairly innocent man in a situation that calls forth the uttermost of pity and fear; and this the modern, restricted by regard for probability and psychology, can, at such a pitch of intensity, seldom do. By the tragic fault or psychical defect the dazzling contrast is blurred. At their highest the pity and the fear are complementary and interdependent—we fear for the imaginary beings because we love them, we pity them because we fear; but the moderns generally attain to one effect more than the other. Sometimes, as in *The Thunderbolt*, *The Doll's House*, and *Borkman*, the misdeed is of modest dimensions, like forgery or embezzlement, for to that a good person can, under the mere stress of circumstances and temptation, be more plausibly brought than to homicide; and thus there is a loss in fear. Sometimes, as in *Hedda* and *Rosmersholm*, *Desire Under the Elms*, and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, there are deeds of horror, but to such a pass the good person must be brought by some psychical abnormality or perversity, the pressure of heredity or subconscious impulse; and thus, however we allow for human irresponsibility, there is a loss in pity. Whatever our principles or convictions, perverts, degenerates, or fantastics cannot but somewhat repel us, certainly do not attract us as truly tragic figures must; and we pity them, without love, only as victims of the physical or social order.

When, on the other hand, the modern author, as in Masefield's *Nan*, Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir*, and Hardy's *Tess*, would have pity and terror both, would keep the character noble or innocent and yet guilty of a great transgression, why, then, he undertakes something as improbable (and certainly not so frank or effective)

as ever Shakespeare or Sophocles did, but without making it probable, and, apparently or actually, falls into melodrama. Stendhal is a penetrating and impartial analyst, before and after; but as is generally acknowledged, there is no adequate motive for the tender and noble Madame de Rênal's sending the disparaging letter which (when he learns of it) provokes Sorel to rush off and shoot her, and none for his taking such vengeance or not suspecting that she was under undue influence or coercion. The deed of horror is called a "*folie pour rien*," the author being "entranced by the *bravura* of this senseless piece of brutality."[2] It was, however, in the original story; and, in being attracted by it, Stendhal would have been understood by Shakespeare and Sophocles though they would have proceeded differently. The deed and the letter both are justified only by the situation which ensues—the ecstasies of penitence and devotion, self-renunciation and heroism, for which in more natural circumstances there would have been no occasion. Never had he known how much she loved him as now when, wounded, despite scandal, she visits him in prison; never had she had such a way of showing it.

Nan and Tess, likewise, are sweet and patient, brave and loving creatures, and the deed of horror is warranted by no motive such as self-defence or the defence of another, but only an accumulation of injury. In the flesh either woman would have turned her back on the man and faced life anew. But with that ending, of course, such passions could not be let loose in the story, nor such emotions of pity and fear in spectator or reader. What Tess has done and what she is to suffer are what make the scene at Stonehenge so poignant.

[2]E. Rod, *Stendhal*, 1892, p. 116; Lytton Strachey, *Books and Characters*, 1922, p. 272.

Her seducer's death and her own are the measure of the "happiness" which she her whole life long had missed, and now, after bloodshed, has for a moment attained. And this terror there must be, as the price of that pity which we unquestionably feel.

V

In such cases, however, once we are by modern authors given something that approaches the ancient and the Elizabethan, we are troubled by it, and thus show the root of the difficulty to be not in our own philosophy or experience but in our realistic taste. We cavil at the "melodrama," are ungrateful for the tragedy. What the author of "The Tragic Fallacy" thinks of the novel now under discussion I do not know; but *Tess* is not "depressing," though *Jude* may be. *Tess* Mr. Joseph Warren Beach discusses, in his fine book on Hardy,[1] under the chapter-heading "Pity," and *Jude* under that of "Truth;" but while he exquisitely responds to the effect of pity and skilfully analyses it, he has misgivings about the way it is brought about. He deprecates, and must needs apologize for, an "offense against realism." What is that? In the chapter on "Truth" he intimates a preference for *Jude* because of its "complete freedom from melodramatic features like the seduction of Tess and the murder of Alec." In the persons of Jude and Sue "we recognize the human nature of our unheroic experience. . . . The reader fresh from Ibsen and Flaubert and Tolstoi may even prefer the drab and biting realism of *Jude* to the shimmering poetry of *Tess*. He will probably find it to be a more characteristic expression of the time." (The taste of the time, I should say, the reader being "fresh from Ibsen, Flaubert and

[1] *The Technique of Thomas Hardy*, 1922.

Tolstoi.") But "truth," "biting realism," is, perhaps, not the most precious quality achieved in novel or drama, certainly not the most precious in Shakespeare; and the word melodramatic, which is here and elsewhere used as equivalent to "wanting in psychological motive," should it not rather be used as equivalent to "wanting in narrative motive," that is, "sensational," the sensation being procured at the expense of the whole? Except in this meaning of the word, Shakespeare, like Sophocles, is melodramatic time and again; most of the sensations in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* only heighten and enrich the effect of the whole.

In the main discussion, however, the "artistic offense" or "melodramatic feature" insisted upon, is the seduction by Alec at the outset. "Her responsibility is represented as practically *nil*." "It is here if anywhere that we hear the creak of the machinery. [The critic suspects a concession to Victorian prudery.] . . . 'A slight incautiousness of character, inherited from her race,'" which is all that Hardy will admit in her, "can hardly amount to the tragic fault in a protagonist . . . would not suit the purposes of Sophocles, of Shakespeare, of Hawthorne, or George Eliot." This is certainly true of the last pair named, but not, I think, of the first; and here plainly appears the great difference between the two pairs of writers, and between early and modern fiction in general. If Tess at the end were more nearly getting her deserts, were more clearly the cause of her own undoing, the effect would be perhaps more natural, doubtless more edifying, but unquestionably less pitiful; and innocence at the beginning is as necessary to her as to Othello and Hamlet, and as the calamity that descends upon them is to all three, in order to arouse noble, not jealous or vindictive, passions in the characters, and

adequately responsive feelings in reader or spectator. The depressing "truth" is preferred, in *Jude.* But if justifiable that is only because *Tess,* too, is a novel, not a tragedy, in prose not verse, and is in language and circumstance too little removed from reality to give the poetic conception full sway, or warrant the violence done to the psychology.

Moreover, the critics decline to accept tragic poetry in its purity, that is, the pleasurable excitement of the emotions with no more than a superficial, a narrative or epical, rather than psychological motive, as offered by the writers of the past. Mr. Krutch himself is so much of the age which he deplores that he cannot accept it in *Hamlet,* will not have the hero a healthy and ideal character, and, dissatisfied with the merely narrative motives for Hamlet's delay—his doubt of the ghost, his unwillingness both to kill a man at prayer and also thereby send this particular one to Heaven,—goes so far as to "invent one"—that "the hero was hesitating between two worlds, the medieval and the modern"[2]—with a candour and simplicity which inspires confidence in him less as a critic than as a citizen, and leaves the youthful Dane as the dramatist conceived and produced him (which is really the only point in question) simply without any motive at all. Even if the invention were not thus acknowledged, such a motive could have no direct bearing upon the tragedy, not only for the weighty reason that there is no trace of it in the text, but for one almost as weighty,—that it would not be dramatic, has to do with the *Zeitgeist,* not the present story, and is another of those Taine-like generalizations in which literature is treated as the mirror of the age or of the critic's own conception of it. If by any canon of criticism

[2] *The Nation,* N.Y., June 26, 1935, p. 730.

we are at liberty thus to interpolate our own ideas, however alien to the author's or his public's way of thinking, they should at least not be alien to the life and spirit of drama. "Between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born,"—let Mr. Krutch or any other put Matthew Arnold, who in those words is describing himself, into a drama, Elizabethan or modern, if he can!

And Mr. Shaw, freely delighting for once in Shakespeare's poetry to the point of forgetting himself and also his rather rigid ideal of a dramatist, soon rallies and remembers both (if in his mind, indeed, the two be wholly distinguishable!), and intimates that Desdemona ought to be more nearly the "supersubtle Venetian" that Iago makes her out to be. In itself he appreciates the poetry, but not as an element of construction,—how by art or artifice, by the potent and enchanting presentation of Othello as "noble," Desdemona as "gentle," and Iago as diabolical but apparently "wise and honest," on the one hand, and by the convention of slander believed when skilfully imparted, on the other, passions are awakened in the hero and heroine and emotions produced in the audience that, with any appreciable measure of responsibility in hero or heroine either, would be considerably diminished. Desdemona can no more be supersubtle than Tess can be a little "sensual," or the pity will be sadly abated. Deliberately, and felicitously, she is given all the "incautiousness" of unsullied innocence.

It was Corneille that first (at least among great dramatists) consciously turned against the precept of Aristotle and the practice of the ancients, in preferring ethics and psychology to pity and fear, and thus influenced all tragic practice and criticism since his day. The tragic deed Aristotle would have committed in

ignorance. Not so the Norman, and thus he secures that effect of internal debate and "conflict of the passions against nature or of duty against love,"[3] which, characteristic of French tragedy, may be highly dramatic, no doubt, but awakens less unmingled and poignant sympathy. What are he and Racine in the scale against the Greeks and Shakespeare?

If there is a double parallel between Shakespeare and Hardy in method and between present-day critics of Shakespeare and of Hardy in their attitude to the method, there is a more striking instance of the same in the case of Shakespeare and Ibsen. Professor Frye[4] objects to *Romeo and Juliet* that it is fate—the stars—which brings about the death of hero and heroine, not, with a greater dramatic economy and exactitude, the family quarrel. So Mr. Lewisohn[5] objects to *Rosmersholm* that it is not the social environment—the hostility and scandal-mongering of the press—which breaks the strength of Rosmer, but fate again—"the dead cling to Rosmersholm"—through the sin committed by Rebecca to save him. A sense of sin eventually overwhelms the enlightened and sceptical Rebecca, as it does Rosmer when he learns of the deed; and "the play derives its power from a traditional plot and a conventional motive—crime and its discovery, sin and its retribution." Here, once more, reason and realism are pitted against imagination and poetry; but there is no question which produces greater emotional effect, the family feud and the social environment, on the one hand, or "the yoke of inauspicious stars" and the "White Horses of Rosmersholm," on the other. In Ibsen's

[3] *Discours de la tragédie*, in *Œuvres*, 1862, p. 70.
[4] *Romance and Tragedy*, p. 298.
[5] *Modern Drama*, pp. 117-8.

play, to be sure, there is no ambiguity; it really *is* the dead—the old established order of Rosmer's house, with its clear and severe distinctions between right and wrong—rather than the scandal and political controversy, that breaks the purpose of the progressive Rebecca and her friend. But that consideration, evidently, would not help Ibsen much with his critic.

VI

Our dramatists, then, cannot mould their situations so simply and boldly as the ancients and Elizabethans, or they will not be appreciated if they do. Yet the outlook is not hopeless. Art may profit by restrictions, by difficulties overcome; and that in this very matter of realism dramatic art has done already. It was not merely realism but a related modern requirement, apparent in Mr. Lewisohn's criticism just quoted, that of originality, which forbade soliloquy and confidence, aside and overhearing, a complicated and ingenious intrigue, and an action scattered out through time and space; and Ibsen and his followers, bowing to the decree, thus secured a more concentrated and plausible action than ever before. Also they have thus been prompted to venture into regions new to drama, both within the soul and without it,—its environment, as we have seen, and the subconscious fringe or border. This latter gives not only greater reality but finer effect to self-deception, and it serves not only to replace soliloquy, aside, and confidence, but also, as in *The Great God Brown* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*, to restore to the stage that contrast between the character and his rôle found in Shakespeare and the ancients, or even that between hero and villain. Of itself it affords a sort of situation.

Above all, the modern dramatist has more freely at his disposal something neither subconscious (though possibly involving that) nor external—the complications of sex. By Shakespeare and the ancients left almost unexploited, they are almost the richest mine of situation:

> . . . Though worked for another reason—the inherent attractiveness of the material—it lends itself to the purposes of art. Here are contrast and compression to hand, ironies and paradoxes craving expression. Man and woman become one flesh, one spirit, are even united in the birth of another, though still remaining two. In vain—*nequicquam*, groaned the Roman—is all the ardor of their embraces. Or, thwarted, love turns to hatred, though still love underneath. There you have both contrast and irony, a dramatic struggle. And because in love one is two, and two are one, there is paradox—opposition and apparent contradiction, which are of the essence of drama. "His honour rooted in dishonour stood." What in Lancelot's eyes is honor—fidelity to Arthur, abandonment of Guinevere—is dishonor in the eyes of the Queen, and hence in his own. Not easily can so deep a vein of irony and paradox be found in life elsewhere. For it is the peculiar quality of love that the one person should identify himself with the other, and the other in turn with him; that their points of view should for the moment merge and interchange.[1]

When rightly handled, at any rate, this material, though it may fail of terror, does not of sympathy, as cheating and forging do.

And the austere Brunetière likewise celebrates the essential dramatic qualities of the passion:

> In the first place it is to be noted that the passions of love are the most universal and the most individual of all. Many of us have lived without knowing ambition. Few of us have not known love; and every one who has deeply felt it is thereby best differentiated from his fellows. Rodrigue does not love like Polyeucte, nor Roxane like Iphigénie. . . . In the second place, it is to be

[1] *Poets and Playwrights*, pp. 95-6.

noted that the passions of love are at the same time the most capricious and nevertheless the most fatal—fatal in their development, capricious in their principle. Does any one know why he loves? And the most heroic effort of will against the power of love generally ends in death; love is strong as death. And in the third place it is to be noted that, being the sweetest of all, the passions of love are also the most disquieting; I mean those from whence arise the most violent agitations, the most cruel sufferings, at times the most irreconcilable hatreds, and the direst catastrophes.[2]

Here again, however, stands our Weeping Philosopher in the way, declaring that love, another illusion or fallacy, is failing us;[3] and if you are to judge merely by the brutalized and bestialized specimens of the passion found in O'Neill, Joyce, and some of the Germans, it would seem to be doing so. But literature being no document, we should remember the fluctuations of taste in both writer and public. Romance has had its innings for so long that the primitive and brutal must be given its turn; and what has dropped out of sight is not necessarily gone for good. Æschylus and Sophocles, undoubtedly, had about them, at their disposal, the same sort of sexual material and knowledge as Euripides, but they made no such use of it; and Shakespeare, who, if you are to judge by the Sonnets, had something rather considerable of the sort in his own private experience, left it, in its complications, almost wholly to Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton, Webster, and Ford. But at this point, surely, if at every other, the critic need not despair. "All things flow," yet some of them not like a river but like wave or tide, recurring. The *jure divino* king and the demonic villain, the arbitrary and personal

[2] *Études critiques*, 1903, VII, pp. 185-6.

[3] See *The Modern Temper*, 1929 (of which "The Tragic Fallacy" forms a part), chap. iv, "Love—the Life and Death of a Value."

Fortune or Destiny, the *hubris* which provokes it or the nemesis which is its reply, all are the figments and fantasies of a mythology, swept down the river of time beyond recovery; but the spell that woman casts upon man or man upon woman, with its consequent entanglements, is "real" if not "earnest," ever new however old, never tame however familiar, and can no more than momentarily be eclipsed, whatever the changes from period to period in literary interest. Nature worship, such as Wordsworth's, may have left the earth forever, but woman worship, with its complement, never will. It may never again be like Shelley's or Browning's, just as theirs was not like Dante's or Petrarch's, but it still bids fair, through the ages, to be deep enough for the making of a lyric, to be mobile, mutable, and poignant enough for the making of a drama or a novel. Or if Aphrodite, like Astraea, is at last forsaking the earth, can we not count upon memory and imagination?

VII

"The future of poetry," said Arnold at a time when this present tide of scepticism and materialism had already set in, "is immense." Wordsworth and Keats said as much, and as buoyantly, before him; and tragedy at its best, as we have been implying, is only the highest, most substantial type of poetry. The question of materials for it, and of a right form for it, is remote and academic—of *that* sort of bankruptcy we need have no fears, however it be nowadays with the other. And as for enlightenment, how many—look about us!—have yet had enough of it to hurt them? It is not enlightenment, certainly, that keeps us where we are, poverty-stricken poetically as economically. "The objects of the Poet's thoughts," as Wordsworth says, "are every-

where;" and as he further says, are in "science itself." And if the confines of our life should contract, as by some scientists those of the universe itself are thought to be doing, why then the future of poetry may be all the brighter. "For poetry the idea is everything . . . poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact." And as the fact grows less tolerably bitter, poetry will be not one of our early losses but if anything the last. A bird in a cage has one consolation, if only one.

In the meanwhile, most of us, I trust, will find life a little worth living; Mr. Krutch himself seems of late to be bearing up pretty well, with so much happiness in the tragedies of the past at his disposal; and Mr. Huxley, no bloodless visionary, is even persuaded that tragedy will be restored to us as a living art. The difference, indeed, between tragedy and the serious drama now practised is pretty much that between "Pity" and "Truth," whether the latter be the depressing truth of *Jude* or that all-embracing, distracting sort, comprehending irrelevancy, which Mr. Huxley finds in the *Odyssey* as in the literature of to-day. In tragedy it is the "supertruth" of Mr. Huxley, or the "higher reality" of Goethe, narrower than the material of our present literary art but more concentrated, more poignant but more stimulating. In tragedy it is, as in any good piece of realism, a new world, but depending much less on its breadth and its likeness to the world about it than on its steep intensity. In tragedy we are not reminded of the world about us except enough to be lost in its own. In our serious drama, in our literature generally, the world about us engrosses us, presses in upon us; the tragic machinery, the superstitions and conventions, whereby it was kept afar, has broken down; and perhaps tragedy may never fit in with contemporary

subjects,—among the Greeks and the Elizabethans themselves, as in the *Œdipus* and *Hamlet*, it was generally not made to do so! Perhaps our stories of contemporary life must still keep fairly within the limits and confines of fact and psychology. But the free and untrammelled converse and contention of the passions are too high a prerogative and solace for the spirit of man irrevocably to surrender. Other conventions and fictions will arise, have indeed, as we have noticed, in a measure already done so. And if there be no other way open, the old familiar legendary stories, with their bold contrasts and sharp simplifications, their large masses and ample improbabilities, may still be treated anew, as they have been of late in Hauptmann's *Armer Heinrich* and D'Annunzio's *Francesca*, and were by the Greeks and Elizabethans before them.

SANCTIONS—ABYSSINIA AND AFTER

P. E. Corbett

In the last eight months our new post-War world has been brought brutally face to face with the question whether it really differs in any essential item from the old world of 1914. Its ark and covenant have run into a storm of primeval passions and the result looks dismally like ship-wreck. When, in the autumn of 1935, the League of Nations, for the first time in its fifteen years of existence, brought into operation against an aggressor the sanctions of Article XVI of the Covenant, the hopes of the new-worldlings ran high. At last, after the tragic falterings of 1931 and 1932, there appeared to emerge a clear resolution to assert the principles of collective security against the anarchy of national lust. But now, in June, 1936, national lust is triumphant, and a disillusioned civilization asks in dejection whether all its plans for keeping the peace have been so much moonshine.

"Keeping the peace" has a vain, tintinnating sound in a world of marching troops and clanging armament factories. Could the League of Nations in October, 1935, still be considered a serious factor in international politics? Were sanctions a farce solemnly played out by politicians with one eye upon the formal satisfaction of treaty requirements, as a sop to earnest peace movements at home, and the other upon the condition of the aggressor, who must not be enraged to the point of upsetting the apple-cart, League, pacts, alliances, and all? Sometimes the world seemed to take this view; witness the shocked astonishment exhibited in so many quarters when there first appeared to be a likelihood of

oil embargo. "Stop oil!" shouted politicians and newspapers. "Why, man, if you stop oil, Italy won't be able to carry on her war."

Or was the remarkably unanimous and singularly ineffective action against Italy an earnest if belated effort by the League to do its essential job, and at the same time to patch up a prestige shattered by the Manchurian episode? Cynically defied in 1931 by a major power whose guilt was duly established in trial before its peers, it had stood quiescent because its greatest members feared to give a lead. That display of calculating poltroonery was the signal for all the malcontents to arm themselves with arrogance. "Japan could do it," sang Germany and Italy, "so can we." And in October, 1935, when the direct threat to national interests, following upon a popular demonstration in favour of the Covenant, had driven one of those greatest members to shelter in the League, the vindication of reason and justice came, or so it would appear, fatally late.

The weight of evidence is for the second view. Neither French nor British governments have ever treated the League of Nations with conscious hypocrisy. This is true even of England's National government, tortuous as its course in foreign policy has been. But they have lacked faith, and they have tried to bolster up the League as a line of defence with national armaments and a fluctuating system of unstable alliances, both of which are devices utterly incompatible with the essence of collective security. They were like men trying to build up a common fortress and all the time tearing away its foundations as material for their own private castles. All that they built was in a perpetual state of crumbling, and the welkin rang with their complaints of each other.

And so what happened last winter on the peaceful shores of Lake Leman was a serious endeavour to use the League's penultimate means of restraining a Covenant-breaker. Penultimate, because there was no recourse to military sanctions. Serious, but neither quite wholehearted nor yet very bold. It was a cautious experiment, not a confident exercise of the police-power. "Without committing ourselves too far," the "sanctionists" seem to say, "let's see what can be done by a little mild pressure." The total result has been a compelling demonstration of the futility and folly of half-measures.

A short analysis of the machinery employed in the application of sanctions will help towards the understanding of what follows. In the first place, Council and Assembly agreed that Italy had resorted to war against Abyssinia in disregard of its obligations under the Covenant. Article XVI thereupon came into operation, making it the duty of all other members of the League to sever their trade and financial relations with the aggressor. The terms of this article do not specify the precise measures to be taken by the members in performance of the duty which it imposes; these are left to be determined by the members themselves. But, in order that all might work to one plan, the Assembly on October 10, 1935, adopted a resolution recommending that a Committee of Co-ordination should be set up consisting of one delegate, assisted by experts, from each member of the League other than Italy and Abyssinia, the parties to the actual dispute. This Committee was duly constituted, held its first session from October 11 to 19, 1935, and made five proposals.

The first proposal was that the members should at once prohibit the export of arms, munitions, and imple-

ments of war to Italy and Italian possessions; the second, that they should prevent in their territories the raising of loans and the grant of credit for the Italian government or for corporations or individuals in Italian territory; the third, that they should prohibit the importation of Italian goods; the fourth, that they should prohibit the export to all Italian territory of transport animals, rubber, and a long list of minerals including—what is of peculiar interest to Canada—nickel, and should, moreover, take the necessary steps to prevent any of these articles, exported to countries other than Italy and its possessions, from being re-exported to Italian territory; fifth and last, that the members applying sanctions should, by increasing trade among themselves, compensate each other as far as possible for losses arising out of sanctions.

It was one thing to make proposals, another to see them put into effect. So large a body as the Co-ordination Committee could hardly be kept in continuous session at Geneva for the unpredictable length of time during which sanctions would have to be maintained. The task of following up the action taken, and of proposing new measures as circumstances might demand, was delegated to a body set up at an earlier date by the League to study the question of sanctions in general. This is the once famous and now deflated Committee of Eighteen, on which Canada has a representative.

The Committee of Eighteen was empowered to appoint such sub-committees as it might deem necessary for the better accomplishment of its work, and among others, it set up a Committee of Experts appointed, one each, by the governments of Great Britain, France, Greece, Poland, Roumania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the Union of Soviet Republics, and Yugoslavia. It was

the duty of this body of ten experts to examine and report to the Co-ordination Committee on the measures taken by governments in application of the proposals summarized above, and to advise upon any questions put to it, with regard, for instance, to the possibility and expediency of additional sanctions.

The Committee of Experts, after two sessions, one in November and the other in December, during which it examined statements from the governments and the laws passed in their respective countries to give effect to the sanctions proposed, reported on December 13, 1935. In the briefest possible form, the gist of this report was as follows:

1. Four states—Albania, Austria, Hungary, and Paraguay—were taking no action under Article XVI of the Covenant.

2. Proposal I (Embargo on arms and munitions) had been accepted by fifty-two governments and actually put into force by fifty.

3. Proposal II (Prohibition of loans and credits) had been accepted by fifty-two governments, and put into force by forty-seven.

4. Proposal III (Prohibition of imports from Italy) had been accepted by fifty governments and put into force by forty-three.

5. Proposal IV (Embargo on transport animals, rubber, and minerals) had been accepted by fifty-one governments and put into force by forty-five.

6. Proposal V (Mutual economic support) had been accepted by forty-nine governments.

Meantime, the discussion of further economic pressure had gone on. Already in its meeting of November 6, the Committee of Eighteen proposed to the governments that petroleum, iron, steel, and coal should be added to

the list of prohibited exports. This resolution was the result of a suggestion made by the Canadian member of the Committee, Mr. Riddell; and thereby hangs a tale of humiliation that will long cloud the dawn of diplomatic history in this country.

The suggestion that Italy's supply of oil, coal, and iron should be cut off came quickly to be described in the world's press as the "Canadian Proposal." It was greeted in Italy with renewed mutterings of war against the sanctionist countries, in particular against Great Britain, inspirer and leader of League action against the invasion of Ethiopia. Correspondents in Rome reported that Italy's chances in such a war were a topic of *café* conversation, and that the conviction of its inevitability was everywhere gaining ground. By the first of December, the newly elected government of Canada had become frightened into making a dramatic disclaimer.

Mr. Mackenzie King, the prime minister, was resting in Georgia from his election fatigues. Mr. Lapointe, minister of justice and acting prime minister, after communicating with his chief, issued from Ottawa the statement that Mr. Riddell's suggestion had been made without instructions, that it was therefore purely a personal contribution from him to the deliberations of the Committee of Eighteen, and that Canada was taking no initiative in any plan to extend the embargo on trade with Italy.

It was to this disavowal that Mr. King referred when, in the singularly unedifying debate between the leader of the opposition and himself which the country was called upon to endure at the opening of Parliament, he declared it possible that "but for the action of the government of Canada in this particular matter at that particular time the whole of Europe might have been

aflame today." Such, if the saving grace of humour and proportion be lacking, may seem the power of Canadian premiers even when they go bathing. Had the orator been misled by the hope expressed in some Italian quarters that the oil proposal, having been repudiated by its supposed authors, would now be dropped like a hot coal by a League which Italy's reaction had thrown into panic? But he knew that the proposal had not been dropped, and his inflated surmise might have been corrected by the effect of Mr. Lapointe's announcement in England. The English attitude was, in brief, that while the disclaimer had left Canada in a ludicrous posture, it was of little consequence in the course of world events. The embargo on oil, iron, and coal would stand or fall on its own possibilities.

The inexcusable thing in the government's conduct was the length of time allowed to elapse between the Canadian representative's suggestion and the disavowal from Ottawa. Mr. Riddell's act was in the press on November 4; Mr. Lapointe's statement was issued on Sunday, December 1. It would have been lamentable enough to see an entirely legitimate Canadian lead in the Committee of Eighteen denied ratification the next morning. The four weeks' delay could hardly be regarded as anything else than tacit approval, an approval withdrawn at the last in abject surrender to the bellicose attitude of Italy.

It is not possible to do more than conjecture what had been passing in the governmental mind. The prime minister informed us that Mr. Riddell had immediately been reprimanded for exceeding his authority, that the government had carefully considered at once publicly repudiating his act and had refrained only because—I quote as before from the parliamentary debates of

February 11, 1936—"we were most anxious not to take any step which might possibly embarrass the situation in Europe or which might appear even remotely to indicate an exception on the part of Canada to what was being done by other parts of the British Empire. In addition to that, we were anxious to hear from Doctor Riddell himself the circumstances surrounding his action." The prime minister went on to say that nothing further would have been done if the proposal had not come to be trumpeted about the world as representing the "especial desire of the government of Canada," whereas it should have been taken as a proposal made by the Committee and not by any particular country or government.

The prime minister's reasons somehow fail to carry conviction, none the less so because he himself took pains to praise them as "good reasons, wise reasons." Is it possible that the government did not at once, any more perhaps than Mr. Riddell, realize that if an additional sanction, suggested by a Canadian representative with the apparent tacit approval of his employers, should prove the last goad needed to drive the enraged fascist lion into a war of despair, Canada would then be irrevocably committed to participation in military sanctions?

There is undoubtedly a large body of opinion in this country against any participation in foreign wars, and a marked tendency to classify possible recourse by the League of Nations to military measures in that condemned category. This opposition is not confined to the racial bloc in Quebec; it is joined in by other elements which have only recently become vocal. There is, in the first place, a group of pacificists who have contrived to convince themselves of a moral distinction between economic and military sanctions; then there are those

who condemn force as an instrument for the preservation of international order on the ground that the remedy is as bad as, and indeed identical with, the disease; finally there are some who argue that we should not contribute to any military support of a League with the fatal defects of the present organization.

For most people the moral distinction between the stoppage of supplies on the one hand and resort to military measures on the other disappears into thin air with the reflection that, if there is any difference in righteousness between starving a man to death and hitting him over the head with a club, it is probably in favour of the latter. True, the former allows him more time to think and possibly to mend his ways, but that does not give it a distinct moral character. The two methods of repression are simply degrees of severity, the use of one or the other depending on the gravity of the offence and the general attitude of the offender. Neither one nor the other can be morally justified except in so far as, without being disproportionately or needlessly drastic, it serves the purpose of deterring from crime. Both are equally just and moral if they satisfy this criterion.

The second distinction, also drawn by some respectable persons, is worthy of more consideration. It is based upon a calculation of expediency, the argument being that economic sanctions are compatible with peace but that military sanctions mean war. It is worth while, in other words, to prevent aggression if, and only if, this can be done without resort to force. Where an aggressor is sufficiently strong and sufficiently determined to defy all commercial and financial penalties he must be allowed to have his way, otherwise the desire to

preserve peace involves us in precisely what we wish to avoid, namely, war.

In reply to this it is scarcely worth while to argue that military occupation or naval blockade may, technically speaking, be just as compatible with peace as the cessation of commercial intercourse. For, though such measures become war only if the state against which they are directed chooses to treat them as acts of war and itself resorts to military opposition, the chance that a strong state will adopt this course is a high one.

But, to confine ourselves for the moment to considerations of sheer expediency, can it ever be expedient to adopt such a limitation upon the methods of deterrence? The answer to this question must depend upon the value of the objective in view; and many of us feel that a war fought on behalf of the organized international community to prevent a state from achieving selfish ends by the use of force is not too great a price to pay for justice between nations and the defence of the weak against the strong.

On the other hand, if the international community allows it to be known that sanctions will end with economic pressure, it would seem to foredoom itself to futility. For one thing, the aggressor will merely have to take up arms against his chastisers to bring sanctions to an end. They must then call off their embargoes or fight to maintain them. And even if the aggressor is not prepared to take so violent a course, it seems doubtful whether economic measures can be counted on to achieve their purpose unless they constitute merely the first stage in one process of constraint. The offender will make a determined effort to hold out long enough to achieve his objective. Sanctions need not cease, it is

true, at that point; they may conceivably be continued until he is compelled to give back his ill-gotten gains. But the achievement of his objective will harden the aggressor's determination, and he will bank upon the disintegrating effect of time on the combination against him.

In the actual case before us, sanctions have not been discontinued with the declaration of Italian sovereignty in Ethiopia. But the disintegrating effect of time is making itself increasingly apparent. It would seem that nothing but a fresh determination to carry League principles through to a triumphant conclusion can maintain the existing embargoes, to say nothing of more vigorous measures. We know that Italian export trade has fallen to a fraction of its former dimensions and, theoretically speaking, a financial *débâcle* seems certain. The insistent practical question remains: Will the cumulative effect of the sanctions now applied, even if they can be maintained at their present level, be sufficient to force Italy to accept a decision by the League as to what is to be done with her latest conquest?

There is, of course, talk of further pressure, and the advent of a new government in France may possibly bring with it a clear decision on the part of that country against Italy. Such a decision may revive the question of oil. If so, the League will have before it the conclusions of a Committee of Experts which reported on February 12. The gist of that report is that an embargo on the export and carriage of oil to Italy would, if universally applied, become fully effective—that is to say, would make it impossible for that country to cover her oil requirements—in a period of from three to three and a half months. This would be true even if the participation of the United States were confined to limiting its

exports to Italy to the normal level of its exports prior to 1935. If, on the other hand, the United States refused to impose any limitation whatever, the sole effect of an embargo would be "to render the purchase of petroleum more difficult and expensive." This was already late, and now the campaign is over. Who can tell whether the stoppage of oil, in any measure now likely to be achieved, would so strangle the economic life of an Italy again at peace that she would bow to the will of the League?

The chief virtue of a plan of collective sanctions, as of any system of pains and penalties, lies not so much in its actual application against the unruly member of the community, as in the foreknowledge that it will come into operation, and will in all probability operate effectively, when an offence is threatened or committed. To provide this foreknowledge, the plan must contemplate measures adequate to interrupt a course of criminal action. The community, in other words, must be prepared to go the whole length necessary to achieve this result in every possible case of law-breaking It cannot be content with half-measures. This is an axiom in the police organization of civilized states; it is equally valid in the community of nations.

That is why the conquest of Abyssinia constitutes so critical an event in the history of international organization. If collective sanctions had been sufficiently efficacious to prevent Italy from making might right, the probability of their having to be employed again would have been immeasurably diminished. As it is, much of the post-War endeavour to safeguard the world's peace would appear to have gone for nothing.

Military sanctions suffer from an undeserved discrimination which results from the confusion of two

things that ought to be kept apart. Many people appear to have the same sort of feeling about them as they have about war undertaken for the furtherance of national policy, whereas they ought to be regarded in precisely the same light as the use of force for police purposes within the state. One may regret the continued necessity of such force; only the fanatic condemns it as immoral or inexpedient.

There is another type of conscientious objector who, while content to see this country participating in economic sanctions, would not go to the length of military measures on behalf of the League of Nations *as now constituted.* This attitude clearly violates what to some of us will seem a fundamental principle, namely, that if an institution is worth supporting, it deserves all the support that can be given without sacrificing more essential interests. Assuming for the moment that we have more vital interests than the establishment of efficient machinery for the preservation of lasting peace, would Canada sacrifice any of these by standing ready to furnish whatever military assistance might reasonably be asked of her in this crisis of the League's life?

But what is worth investigating in this attitude is the qualification—"as the League is now constituted." The point made by the critics here is that our present League of Nations is totally undeveloped on one side. It has machinery for the settlement of disputes and, though it has been inefficiently used, for the prevention of successful aggression; but it has no device for satisfying the legitimate demands of economically or politically underprivileged nations It has the means of ascertaining and enforcing existing law, but no apparatus for changing the law where change is needed. It renders static what now is, offering no active principles

of evolution. It is a League of the Haves against the Have-nots. Article XIX of the Covenant, with its timid suggestion that the Assembly may call attention to treaties that need revision and to conditions that threaten peace, offers no promise whatever of action. If peace is to be preserved, we must have a mechanism for relieving congested populations, for the equitable distribution of essential raw materials and for the removal of unfair discriminations against nations or races. Thus, and only thus, by the eradication of its causes, can war be abolished.

Within the last ten years there has been a marked advance towards general realization of this need of peaceful change. It is a fallacy to maintain that it was fully understood in 1919 and that the League of Nations was from the beginning intended to exercise the function of readjustment as vigorously as that of law enforcement. The proof lies in the very weakness of Article XIX, which is the only reference in the Covenant to this essential phase of international government.

But can this lack be an excuse for milk-and-water support? Every attempt to establish a new institution must have some regard to existing facts; and it is a fact that the mass of humanity was in 1919, and still is, far more anxious to build an organization which will prevent violence now than to make provision for the alteration of conditions which eventually must lead again to violence. This preference, or order, is true of the whole history of politics. Society has always organized first for defence outside and the maintenance of peace within; legislative organization for the removal of inequalities comes after that. The weight of human experience is on the side of those who say: "Show us that you can solve conflicts of interest without recourse to war, and we

will then study means of achieving a fairer distribution of the world's wealth and opportunity." It may be that in this humanity flies in the face of logic, that it should always have gone straight at the task of removing the causes of disputes; but if we can so much as approach, in the international sphere, what has been accomplished by an illogical method within the national society, we shall have enduring cause for satisfaction.

Taking the long view, students of the origin and growth of political institutions may feel confident that the next great advance in the art of politics must be the effective organization of the international community. But for the moment the outlook is not bright, and the anxiety which afflicts most of us is, to put it in a nutshell, whether the decade or two immediately before us will leave any civilization to organize. Japan presses on with her domination of China, Germany consolidates the Rhineland and looks eastward for new fields to conquer, Italy crowns her king Emperor of Ethiopia. Among the remaining members of the League two opposite movements are developing. One looks towards a "stronger League," the other towards disintegration. Discussions are proceeding in London which may determine whether the governments of the British Commonwealth will range themselves with the strengtheners or with the scuttlers. Surely, however, no decision to abandon or even to suspend the effort for collective security can be reached without first giving to our peoples ample opportunity to express themselves. Let us therefore prepare ourselves to deal honestly and intelligently with an issue of immense moment.

As a first step, let us ask ourselves what strengthening the League means. It must be apparent to everyone who has followed the Abyssinian affair that the existing

Covenant is far stronger than any action that was taken under it. If we cannot use the strength available, what is the hope, and what would be the use, of adding further strength? Assuredly there are ambiguities that might be removed and gaps that might be filled; but the essential thing is not a tightening of the machinery, it is more seriousness and more courage in those who set it up. Here is the point at which every Canadian concerned about the part played by this Dominion in the world's work must take stock of his own and his government's attitude.

The Canadian government's flight from responsibility on December 1 came as a sorry climax to a series of exhibitions of half-heartedness. In 1920 we began by an attempt to delete Article X of the Covenant; failing in this, we laboured for an interpretation which leaves to each member of the League the right to determine how far it will go in upholding by military means the mutual guarantee of territorial integrity and political independence; at the same time we refused to participate in a proposed discussion of the distribution of raw materials; in 1924 we rejected the protocol designed to fill gaps in the anti-war organization; in 1932 we condoned, by our consent to a policy of inaction, Japan's rape of Manchuria; and finally, at the end of 1935, in a retreat which brought shame to Canadians everywhere, we denied our name to a proposal that would have done more than anything else to impede Italy's campaign of "civilization" in Ethiopia.

If this shillyshallying is to continue, it would be better for our national dignity to withdraw from the League. As for the cause of peace, that can hardly benefit appreciably from the lukewarm approval which our continued but passive membership appears to

signify; and there are many Canadians whose every instinct urges that we either go into this business of international organization with energy and courage or get out of it altogether. Complete withdrawal, after due notice as required by the Covenant, would be honest, if regrettable; but a formal membership, unsustained by the determination to accept its full implications, is unendurable hypocrisy.

THE INTELLECTUALS IN THE THIRD REICH

H. STEINHAUER

I

THE official prophets of the New Germany have received more than their due share of attention in the foreign press. The sensational and, at times, fantastic notions of Herren Hitler, Goebbels, Rosenberg, and Streicher have diverted our attention from the many intellectuals who direct Germany's cultural institutions and write for the better class of journals. What is the attitude of these artists, writers, scholars, and scientists to the Third Reich? Do they welcome the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, do they recoil from it in horror, or do they accept it because they are powerless to do anything else?

Such answers as have been given to these questions, even by competent observers of the German scene, are very unsatisfactory. On the one hand we are left with the impression that all, or nearly all, of the German intellectuals have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. From the opposite camp we are told that "thinking Germany" is a mass of seething discontent. Neither of these views is, of course, true. There have been a few men of extraordinary courage, who have publicly expressed their disapproval of National Socialist cultural policy. Some of them are in concentration camps, others have left the country, while the rest have been allowed to remain at their posts. The following instances should dispel the myth of subservient docility.

The eminent physicist Max Planck, a Nobel Prize winner, came out openly in defence of internationalism in science. The theologian Karl Barth refused to take an oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler and left Germany. The scientific journal *Die Naturwissenschaften* (February

16, 1934) carried a eulogy of the recently deceased Jewish chemist Fritz Haber. Haber, a Nobel Prize winner, had been head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry until the National Socialist seizure of power, when he resigned his post and moved to Cambridge University. The author of the obituary notice in the *Naturwissenschaften*, the physicist Max von Laue, refers to the Institute in which Haber has worked as *his* (*i.e.*, Haber's) Institute. After listing the chemist's great achievements in science, he continues:

> On May 2, 1933 Haber tendered his resignation.
>
> Themistocles has gone down in history, not as the exile at the court of the Persian king, but as the victor of Salamis. Haber will go down in history as the genius who invented the process for combining nitrogen with oxygen, which forms the basis for extracting nitrogen from the air; as the man...who achieved a triumph in the service of his country and all humanity.

A year later Haber's many friends and admirers decided to celebrate the anniversary of his death. The National Socialist authorities got wind of the plan and forbade its execution. The celebration was held in defiance of the prohibition.

The Ninety-third Congress of German Natural Scientists and Physicians, held in September, 1934, was opened by the *Führer* of the National Socialist physicians, Dr. Wagner, who demanded that all German science have a National Socialist *Weltanschauung*. Dr. Wagner was followed by the president of the Congress, Geheimrat Professor Dr. C. Bosch, who emphasized the absolute necessity of maintaining the *universal* aims of the natural sciences, thus flatly contradicting the admonition of the official *Führer*. Spontaneous applause greeted the remarks of Werner Heisenberg concerning Einstein's

theory of relativity, without which, said Heisenberg, progress in physics was impossible.

Protests against the Goebbels spirit have by no means been confined to the scientists. The liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* has published a series of sly, devastating criticisms of the official Nazi thinkers. These attacks are of necessity carefully worded, so as to give the Ministry of Propaganda no excuse for suppressing the paper; but for the alert, intelligent reader they lose none of their effectiveness. The *Deutsche Rundschau* suggested editorially that it would greatly strengthen Germany's position in the cultural world if she were represented at the PEN club by well-known authors, rather than by young men who had given exemplary service to the National Socialist cause, but whose literary reputation was still to be made. And there is the case of Professor Hans Leisegang of Jena, who spent six months in a concentration camp because he was alleged to have said of Hitler's funeral oration on Hindenburg: "It isn't proper that a corporal should make a speech about a field-marshal."

The story of Wilhelm Furtwängler's verbal exchange with Dr. Goebbels is well known. The conduct of Professor Wilhelm Sauerbruch, Germany's greatest living surgeon, is equally striking. When the National Socialist officials ordered Sauerbruch to dismiss his ten Jewish assistants, he is said to have replied, "An eleventh will resign with them." But the National Socialists are not worried by such threats; true to the spirit of Horst Wessel, they would rather die than be healed by a Jewish or philo-Semitic physician. So the ten assistants were dismissed, while their chief remained at his post. When Sauerbruch, among others, was asked to broadcast in favour of Hitler's withdrawal from the League of Nations, he agreed to do so; but he was the only one of the speakers to

stress the international character of science and the necessity of maintaining intellectual contact with the outside world.

But it was Richard Strauss, the composer, who played the neatest trick on the National Socialist cultural leaders. Strauss accepted the offer to replace Bruno Walter as conductor of the Prussian State Opera. But one of his first performances was a new opera of his own, *Die schweigsame Frau*, with a libretto by the Jewish writer Stefan Zweig! Strauss was immediately retired "because of old age."

II

Those German intellectuals who have made no protest against National Socialism may be divided into at least four groups. There is the large number of conservative Germans, to whom certain individual National Socialist leaders (from the *Führer* down) may be extremely distasteful, but who believe nevertheless that National Socialism is the only possible political system for Germany to-day. Others, who detest Nazism as much as does any Western liberal, subscribe outwardly to its tenets because they have no taste for denunciation and the concentration camp or for permanent unemployment. That may not be a very heroic attitude to take; but Germany is blessed with no more heroes than the rest of the world. Thirdly, there are a few intellectuals who accepted the National Socialist ideology in its early days; these have naturally welcomed Hitlerism with open arms. And finally there are many—far too many, alas!—who are shouting with the mob for personal gain.

Only the last two groups—the early disciples and the recent converts—are of special interest to the foreign observer. The intellectual world in which these people

are living, their loves and hates, hopes and fears, their peculiar solutions to the problems of our civilization, above all their attempted transvaluation of all values—to describe this world is the aim of this study.

III

It is a fact that in its early days, National Socialism had very few cultured Germans among its adherents. Large sections of the bureaucracy and the judiciary, who showed an astonishing leniency towards Nazi illegality and subversive activity, did so out of a hatred for the Republic rather than from a love of the Nazis. Even writers like Paul Ernst and Hans Grimm, whose ideology is very close to that of National Socialism, stood outside the movement proper. There are, however, two important scientists who were ardent Nazis as early as in 1923. They are the physicists Johannes Stark and Philipp Lenard, both Nobel Prize winners, who have published their credo in a pamphlet called *National Socialism and Science*.[1]

The document opens with a joint letter by Herren Stark and Lenard, originally published in the *Grossdeutsche Zeitung* for May 8, 1924—that is, shortly after Hitler's trial for his part in the Putsch of 1923. The spirit which Hitler displayed at that trial, the authors state, is that which has animated the scientists of all ages: Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Faraday. It was the spirit of absolute clarity, honesty, hatred of compromise —virtues which are found only in men of Aryan-Germanic blood. But for two thousand years these qualities have been combated by the same Asiatic people, which has persecuted Christ and Giordano Bruno, Hitler, and

[1] *Nationalsozialismus und Wissenschaft*, München, Zentralverlag der NSDAP Franz Eher Nachf., 1934.

Ludendorff. Hitler and his associates are a gift of God from an age long dead, when races were purer, men greater, minds more clear-sighted than to-day. Since the universities have failed to provide this German spirit, the man of the people (*i.e.*, Hitler) must do so.

The remainder of the pamphlet consists of an article, *Freedom of Science*, written by Professor Stark since the National Socialist Revolution. The notion that science and scientists must stand above the nation, writes Herr Stark, is a Jewish one. National Socialism, on the contrary, believes that the scientist should primarily serve the nation. Once this fundamental truth is realized, it is readily seen that science was never free under the Weimar Republic, but has been liberated from an intolerable servitude by the National Socialists. For it must not be forgotten that science is predominantly a creation of the Nordic-Germanic group of the Aryan peoples. A glance at the photographs in Lenard's *Great Scientists* reveals in all of them the common Nordic-Germanic features. The most characteristic trait of the German's scientific activity is his capacity for observing and respecting facts, without allowing his ego to distort them. The German finds pleasure in the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, but cares little about propagandizing or commercializing it. The Jewish spirit, on the other hand, has none of this objectivity or disinterestedness. The Jewish scientist respects facts only when they harmonize with his opinions or aims and does not scruple to confuse or re-arrange the facts to suit his theory. Therefore the Jew has little capacity for creative scientific work. True, he can obtain important results by imitating his Germanic models; but he cannot rise to really creative achievements; he can make no great discoveries in the natural sciences.

But what of Heinrich Hertz, the discoverer of Hertzian waves?, Professor Stark asks himself. Hertz, he replies, had a Germanic mother and probably inherited his genius from her.

If we remember, he continues, that the strength of the Jewish scientist lies in theory, not in the observation of facts (which is the proper business of science), we may appreciate the great service that the National Socialist Revolution performed in the cause of science. For in Republican Germany the Jewish scientists had gathered in cliques and formed "concerns" to spread their theories among the young men. Thus there was a mathematical concern at Göttingen, led by Klein and Hilbert; in physics there was the Einstein-Sommerfeldt clique; in physical chemistry the Haber concern. These cliques exercised an intolerable control over scientific life, at times bordering on intellectual terror. They also dominated academic life and national research. Thus, while the bulk of scientific literature in Germany grew, its value decreased. The really creative achievements in science were made by Anglo-Saxon scientists, while Germany produced only theories: Einstein's theory of relativity, Heisenberg's matrix theory, Schrödinger's wave mechanics. With the expulsion of the theorists....

IV

Stark and Lenard were at any rate sincere National Socialists since the infancy of the movement. When the Revolution of 1933 came, there was the inevitable scramble for the band-waggon, a veritable epidemic of indecent conversions. In June of that year the *Deutsche Rundschau* issued a warning against the weather-vanes and toadies who had joined the National Socialist ranks

since Hitler's advent to power. That there was good reason for the warning the following items will show:

(1) Professor Hans Naumann published in 1933 a volume of scholarly essays, which he dedicated "to the *Führer* and the Poet, that is, to Adolf Hitler and Stefan George."

(2) Professor Albert Soergel, the most authoritative writer on contemporary German literature, hastily brought out a third volume of his *Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit.*[1] In this latest work he treats those conservative writers whom he had neglected in the previous two volumes and who are likely to enjoy a wide degree of popularity in the New Germany. A rather lame preface attempts to justify the critic's former neglect of these writers: they were outshouted, he says, by their loud liberal contemporaries. But the dedication to Hanns Johst, the new Nazi president of the German Writers' Academy, tells a different tale.

(3) More flagrant than Soergel's conversion is that of Paul Fechter, the literary editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau.* Herr Fechter is perhaps the outstanding conservative critic of post-War Germany, author of several successful novels, of monographs on Hauptmann and Wedekind, and of numerous essays in literary criticism, as well as of a bulky history of German literature. Soon after Hitler's accession to power, Herr Fechter began to publish in the *Deutsche Rundschau* a series of articles dealing with the future of literature in the New Germany. In the first of these essays, "The Confusion of the Literatures,"[2] he points to the wide gulf which separated conservative from liberal writers in post-War Germany. The liberal literature, including the work of such men as

[1] Dritte Folge: *Dichter aus deutschem Volkstum*, Leipzig, R. Voigtländer, 1934.
[2] "Die Auswechslung der Literaturen" (*Deutsche Rundschau*, May, 1933).

Wassermann, Werfel, the brothers Mann, the two Zweigs, Remarque, and Feuchtwanger, was the "official" literature of the German Republic. It was analytical, erotic, dominated by a false psychology, concerned with problems that do not exist in life at all, but only in the literary journals. It was discussed everywhere, read even by conservative Germans and regarded abroad as the representative product of the post-War German mind.

Besides this "official" literature, there was the unrecognized work of the conservative writers. This second, underground literature was read by a few "queer" people, who claimed that this was the true German literature, because it was not literature at all, but *Dichtung* in the old German sense (*i.e.*, creative writing). We older people, Herr Fechter continues, often fell into a rage to see the "official" writers sneering at everything we held sacred. Hence the young students who decided to uproot them from German life (the reference is to the famous bonfire of liberal books) were fully justified in their anti-liberal crusade.

Next month (June, 1933) Herr Fechter returns to the assault in an article entitled "What Shall We Do with the Writers?" (*Was fangen wir mit den Dichtern an?*). He rejoices that some of the liberal men of letters were forced out of the Writers' Academy[3] and replaced by real German poets like Emil Strauss, Paul Ernst, Hans Grimm, E. G. Kolbenheyer, Wilhelm Schäfer, Hans Carossa, Rudolf Binding, Peter Dörfler, Agnes Miegel, H. F. Blunck, Will Vesper, Hanns Johst, Werner Beumelberg. We must remember, says Herr Fechter, that "the repu-

[3]Herr Fechter praises the government's tactful way of discharging this unpleasant duty. Every member of the Academy was asked to sign a pledge that he would support the National Socialist government. Anyone who refused to sign automatically dropped out of the Academy. "In this way all compulsion from above was avoided and everyone was allowed freedom of decision."

tation of many of these men and women has scarcely penetrated to the outside world, thanks to a falsely orientated criticism. Merely to spread a knowledge of their names abroad, not to speak of their works, will be a difficult task; and even in Germany things are not very different."

"Thanks to a falsely orientated criticism." It so happens that Paul Fechter has published a little volume in the Reclam series, dealing with contemporary German literature.[4] Since it was written by one of those few "queer" people who had recognized the true German literature, one would expect it to be an apotheosis of the conservative writers, whom the wicked Republicans had "outshouted." One finds, instead, that Herr Fechter's study devotes more space to the liberal writers than to the conservatives. Of the new academicians, Carossa, Dörfler, Strauss, and Beumelberg are not mentioned at all, not even in the bibliography! And in Herr Fechter's history of literature,[5] published late in 1932, Dörfler and Beumelberg are still unmentioned, while Carossa, Schäfer, Binding, and Hanns Johst are barely named.

(4) But undoubtedly the most astonishing example of *ad-hoc* science is the discovery by an eminent German mathematician, Professor L. Bieberbach of Berlin, of a distinction between two types of mathematical thinkers:[6] the "J"-type (Aryan) and the "S"-type (French and Semitic). The influences of nationality, race, and blood, contends Professor Bieberbach, affect both the choice of problems and the creative style, in mathematics as in the other sciences. For instance, the "J" (German) type

[4] *Deutsche Dichtung der Gegenwart*, 2. Auflage, Leipzig, Reclam, 1929.

[5] *Dichtung der Deutschen*, Berlin, Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1932.

[6] A résumé of Professor Bieberbach's paper is given in *Nature* for August 8, 1934, by Professor G. H. Hardy of Oxford University.

of mathematician treats the theory of imaginary numbers very differently from the "S" (French and Semitic) type. Gauss, an outstanding example of the "J" type, stresses the intuitive (*anschaulich*) interpretation of $\sqrt{-1}$, while Couchy's exposition of the theory makes the "J" type of mathematician feel ill at ease. The "S" type may be recognized by a technical virtuosity and a pre-occupation with concepts, abstractions, intellectualism. One of the crowning achievements of the "J" type, Hilbert's[7] work on axiomatics, has been distorted by the abstract Jewish thinkers of the "S" type, and made into an intellectual variety performance.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find Professor Bieberbach describing the revolt of the Göttingen students against the great mathematician Edmund Landau as a "manly rejection of an alien type of teacher." This man's un-Germanic style of teaching and research proved intolerable to German sensibilities.

One could pile instance upon instance of this species of time-serving: early in 1934, the literary journal *Euphorion* changed its name to *Volkstum und Dichtung* (Nationalism and Literature), and announced its intention of breaking with the humanistic tradition in literary criticism. The *Grosse Brockhaus* encyclopædia, in process of printing when the National Socialist Revolution occurred, suddenly began to mention the Jewish origin of non-Aryan German writers. The publishing house of Langenscheidt announced a new series of foreign readers for school use, emphasizing such titles as: Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-worship*, Seeley's *Expansion of England*, Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race*, Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. A writer in the academic *Zeitschrift für*

[7]According to Stark (*Nationalsozialismus und Wissenschaft*) Hilbert is a Jew!

Deutschkunde[8] begins an essay on the novelist Otto Gmelin thus: "The name Gmelin is found neither in our most recent histories of literature nor among the members of the Writers' Academy. But here and there one sees a publisher's prospectus bearing his expressive (*charaktervoll*) Nordic countenance with its full ash-blond hair." The Propyläen Verlag in Berlin, announcing a new four-volume biographical work on one hundred and fifty great Germans, includes, among other queer names, those of the notorious anti-Semitic court preacher Stöcker, Admirals Tirpitz and Scheer, the aviator Richthofen, Moeller van den Bruck, and the two Nazi martyrs Leo Schlageter and Horst Wessel!

V

The foreign student of contemporary German civilization, meeting numerous examples of such obvious intellectual dishonesty, finds himself repeatedly wondering how it is possible for educated, thinking men to forswear themselves so perfidiously and yet retain their self-respect. What sort of psychological mechanism is it which allows these artists and scholars to look back on their former selves without feeling shame or remorse? An answer to this question is to be found in the tireless efforts of the Ministry of Propaganda to instil into the minds of all Germans the belief that the Revolution of 1933 has brought about an unprecedented break with the past. A contemporary German historian describes our age as one "in which the destiny of the [German] nation is being decided perhaps for centuries."[1] A German musical composer writes: "Through the German people there goes an awakening without parallel since the days

[8] *Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde*, March, 1934.

[1] E. O. Volkmann, *Am Tore der neuen Zeit*, p. 5.

of the Reformation. One might say that for the first time the nation is becoming clearly conscious of its true nature and its soul."[2] This is the language which Dr. Goebbels has been pounding into the heads of the German masses for a decade. The intellectuals never took it seriously until they were faced with the prospect of a long rule of National Socialism. In the circumstances our "converts" eagerly lapped up this comforting doctrine and used it as a conscience-balm.

Not the least fantastic of the National Socialist beliefs is its interpretation of the term *das dritte Reich*. Technically it denotes the third attempt to establish a German empire, the first being the medieval empire, and the second Bismarck's Germany. But the phrase also has a religious and metaphysical significance; it refers to an ideal future State, a Utopia, a millenium. It is in this sense that Ibsen uses it in *Emperor and Galilean*, and in this context the word *Reich* translates "spiritual kingdom" and carries with it the religious atmosphere of such phrases as "the Kingdom of God," "Thy Kingdom come," "My Kingdom is not of this world." In an interesting paper[3] Miss Agnes Stanfield has traced the history of this religious idea in German thought from Herder to Hegel. But what the National Socialist of to-day understands by the words *das dritte Reich* is revealed in a lengthy study by Professor Julius Petersen of the University of Berlin: *The Yearning for the Third Reich in German Legend and Literature*.[4]

Professor Petersen finds that the thinkers of the past have created six types of millenium: (1) the poet's vision

[2]Georg Vollerthum in a preface to Anton Mayer's *Geschichte der Musik*, p. 7.
[3]"Das Dritte Reich" (*Modern Language Review*, April, 1934).
[4]*Die Sehnsucht nach dem Dritten Reich in deutscher Sage und Dichtung*, Stuttgart, J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934.

of a Golden Age in the mythical past, (2) the humanistic dream of a perfectly rational State, a conception of the "theoretical man," or intellectual, (3) the prophet's theocratic dream of a future kingdom of God, (4) the social man's dream of a Communist Utopia, (5) the militarist's (*Machtmensch*) imperialistic vision of a world monarchy, and finally (6) the economic man's federative conception of a League of Nations. The first two Utopias, Herr Petersen argues, are the insubstantial dreams of poets and philosophers, without roots in the soil; the next two are Asiatic in origin (*i.e.*, Jewish and Russian); while the last two are Occidental (*i.e.*, Anglo-Saxon and French).

It remained for the German man, continues Herr Petersen, to conceive a seventh type of millenium: the National Socialist ideal of a *Volksreich*[5] (national or racial kingdom). This new ideal is the fusion of the former six. Its keynote is the concept of nationhood or racial community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). It is built up on the belief that there is no way to humanity except through the nation, thus differing from all previous Utopias, which were non-national. It is opposed to the selfish domestic policy of princes (*i.e.*, it is anti-monarchical), to ultramontane church politics (*i.e.*, to Roman Catholicism), to the intellectual arrogance of the "theoretical man" (*i.e.*, to Rationalism), to the financial interests of international capitalism (*i.e.*, to Jewish influence), to the internationalization of the proletariat (*i.e.*, to Marxism), and to uprooted aestheticism (*i.e.*, to the liberalism of the intellectuals and artists who supported the Weimar Republic).

[5]The word *Volk*, as used in National Socialist literature, refers to the German nation, but only to that part of it which is *truly* German—*i.e.*, "Aryan." French writers render *Volk* by *race* and *Volkstum* by *racisme*.

The National Socialist ideal of the Third Reich, Herr Petersen concludes, looks back to a Golden Age of pure and loyal naturalness, such as was realized in the Nordic civilization of primitive times. It teaches the idea of self-sacrifice for the sake of the common good. It seeks the strength that comes from union, in order to achieve equal rights for all members of the race (*Volksgenossen*). It recognizes that everyone has a right to employment and that all the social classes should participate in the administration of the State. National Socialism believes in a reconciliation of the classes, not through a schematic equalization of wealth, but by giving to everyone what is his and by uniting all in a helpful love. But above all, National Socialism believes in a divinely ordained saviour (*Heilsbringer*) and *Führer*, and that belief has become a religious certainty.

Whether Professor Petersen believed all this before 1933 is difficult to say; one hopes not. But the National Socialist leaders have been preaching such doctrine for a decade; and with the collapse of the Republic many a learned man persuaded himself that he did believe it and that, believing, he must cast off his former corrupt self and help usher in the New Jerusalem. Hence the religious phraseology that one meets in current German literature, where we would speak in sober, prosaic language. In Germany it is always: a new era has dawned for man, the kingdom of God has been brought to earth and we are soon to see a new world with a new table of values, a world ruled and led by the "German" man. And when the National Socialists proclaim to the world at large that the Third Reich will last a thousand years, they are modestly expressing a religious conviction that it will endure forever.

VI

How do these prophets of the Third Reich meet the numerous onslaughts that have been made against National Socialist Germany by the outside world? How do they react to the storm of indignation that greeted the early Nazi barbarities?

In the summer of 1933 the *Kölnische Zeitung* published a letter by Romain Rolland, protesting against the National Socialist lapse into medieval barbarism and appealing to the "true" Germany, the Germany of Lessing, Goethe, Beethoven, to assert itself and throw off the yoke of the inquisitors who were ruling the country. Of the many public replies which M. Rolland's letter evoked, the following three deserve closer study.

Rudolf Binding, a former liberal and the author of a bitterly disillusioned war book (*Aus dem Kriege*, translated as *A Fatalist at War*), points out that Romain Rolland's "true" Germany is a chimera of his international brain, without counterpart in reality. To M. Rolland's assurance that he loves Germany, Binding replies that it is not the ideal Germany he must love, but Germans of flesh and blood, struggling men, desperate men, foolish men, ardent, inspired, fanatical men. Romain Rolland had called the National Socialist leaders inquisitors. Inquisitors, says Binding, never became the leaders of a nation, and he contrasts the Nazi leaders with the Spartacists, mutinous sailors, political gangsters, and stop-gaps who ruled Republican Germany. "We deny nothing," he continues, "neither our racial policy, which must be painful to other races like the Jews, nor the childish bonfires of books, nor the intrusion of politics into our academies and universities. But all these phenomena, however terrible they may appear and however decisively

they may affect the individual or the community, are merely marginal occurrences which cannot touch the core, the truth of the great event." He laughs at Rolland's distinction between the true and false Germany—"it almost looks as if you had to teach Adolf Hitler and the whole German nation what is truly German." And Goethe, whom M. Rolland had hailed as the ideal German, was as German as Goering or Goebbels or Storm Trooper Miller. What the Germans passionately desire is to be manly and German. "The world cannot appreciate the deeply religious nature of this Revolution, with its processions and symbols, its flags and vows of allegiance, its martyrs and fanatics, even among children. That is the true spirit of the Revolution; the chauvinism, the vain love of uniforms and decorations, the cheap sentiment—these exist, but they are not the essence, not the core."

The second important reply to Romain Rolland's charges is an article, "Germany's Retrogression to Medievalism,"[1] by Wilhelm Schäfer. Yes, says Schäfer, Germany is returning to the Middle Ages, to that civilization which was moulded by Germans and which best suits the "German" man. The New Germany is throwing off all the pet delusions of the modern world: freedom, utilitarianism, individualism, humanism, progress, shallow optimism, materialism. All these notions were alien to the medieval mind. The individual, for example, did not regard himself as an end; he claimed no human rights; he knew only service in a life that was regulated absolutely from above. Such was the feudal society of the Middle Ages, a society in which everything was held in fief from God, in which everyone was a vassal of God, including the emperor as supreme liege lord, exercising his office by

[1] "Der deutsche Rückfall ins Mittelalter" (*Die Neue Literatur*, Feb., 1934).

the grace of God. There was no property in the modern sense, which the individual could dispose of at will, but neither was there Socialism, seeking to transfer all property to the State, so that the citizens might eat out of a common pot. There was no such pot, nor any proclaimed right thereto; there were only service and duty to the liege lord. In such a society, based on the graciousness of the lord and the loyalty of the vassal, law was superfluous because law had not yet been divorced from life, had not yet become, in the words of Faust, "an everlasting torment, dragging on from generation to generation." To be sure, there were classes in medieval society, classes ranged according to their value for the State; but this gradation knew no social inferiority; for the whole of life stood in the mystery of eternity. "There is no greater political idea than that of feudalism."

However, it is no blind imitation of the medieval world that Schäfer advocates; that would be sheer romanticism. What Germany needs is a return to a "German" way of life on the basis of German *Volkstum*, with the medieval social order as its ideal. It must trade in "modernism" for a new faith, which can be found only in the past. Not in the immediate past, not in Bismarck's State, which was tainted by the curse of modernism; but in the society of the Middle Ages. "It is not reaction, but a return home, when we recall once more our duty and the happiness we derived from the German style of life and which we forgot so long in wandering on the alien paths of progress."

The novelist E. G. Kolbenheyer enlightens M. Rolland with a dose of pseudo-science. Kolbenheyer belongs to the group of conservative thinkers who preach the "biological" view of history. Like any human organism, this theory runs, the State must be composed of homo-

geneous cells, with just enough anti-bodies to ensure progress. But the anti-bodies must never become strong enough to disrupt the native cells, or the result will be disease and decay. Moreover, the anti-bodies must remain akin to the main body of cells (*i.e.*, they must not be Jews). Now, a revolution may be either healthy or diseased: if it disrupts the historical continuity of the nation, it is harmful; if it restores the nation's disrupted continuity, it is beneficial. The Revolution of 1918 constituted a break with Germany's historical past, since it championed such un-German ideas as internationalism, a proletarian State, Marxism, submission to foreign influence; it was therefore a disease. On the other hand, the National Socialist Revolution of 1933 restored German unity and expelled foreign influence from Germany. It re-established the supremacy of the indigenous cells and thus brought about recovery from the disease of Republicanism.

The internationalism which M. Rolland preaches, says Kolbenheyer, is the great disease from which Europe is suffering to-day. It was responsible for the Great War, and the only hope for the Europe of the future is a body of homogeneous nations on the Italian and German style. The Western ideal of internationalism (represented by France) is thus shown to be *the* hindrance to progress. And the proof of this analysis is the bloodless and disciplined character of both the Italian and German revolutions, as compared with France's feverish attempts to obtain security, her hoarding of gold, her military manoeuvres, her excessive armaments, her diplomatic protective alliances. "The progress of Europe proceeds from national to supernational life. The way of internationalism has proven itself ineffectual and has been practically abandoned by all the nations."

VII

From the material brought together in these pages—and I believe it is representative of current German opinion—one would be justified in drawing the conclusion that the German scientists have behaved far more honourably than the guardians of the humanities. The Starks and Lenards and Bieberbachs are far rarer than the Fechters, Naumanns, Soergels, and Bindings. Moreover, they lack the persuasive subtlety of the literary men; they talk such obvious nonsense that their babble has no propaganda value. The real danger comes from the seductive eloquence of the *littérateurs* and social scientists. Even when they are merely paraphrasing the prejudices of Storm Trooper Miller, they put such a learned facade on these prejudices that one must be wary or one is lost. Bertrand Russell recently stated that, during the last war, the natural scientists on both sides of the conflict showed a far greater respect for truth and scientific integrity than their humanistic colleagues. Anyone who has followed German opinion in the last two years must sorrowfully admit that Mr. Russell's contention still holds.

One may take some comfort from the thought that, having turned once, the weather-vanes will probably turn again as soon as the wind begins to blow from the opposite direction. But the wind will have to change first; and there is but small hope that Herren Goebbels, Goering, and Rosenberg will ever become infatuated with the principles of liberalism. No, the hope for the future of Germany must rest with those scholars and thinkers who are quietly but firmly carrying on liberal propaganda in the face of official opposition. There is reason to believe that liberal thought will grow rather than decline in Ger-

many. There have been many prophecies that the religious frenzy which Nazism requires would exhaust itself. Those prophecies have now been realized. The enthusiasm has worn itself out; so much so, that the government has announced a new academic purge. These purges cannot go on forever, especially when it is becoming increasingly evident that the new governmental appointees are vastly inferior to the men whom they replace. It is the bitterness caused by this spectacle that will awaken the mass of intellectuals to the realization that the Third Reich, far from being the kingdom of God on earth, is nothing more or less than a political *coup* for the benefit of the mentally inferior. And that realization will bring action in its wake.

SYMBOLISM AND POETRY

Louis Cazamian

THE subject, which is wide, and no doubt ambitious, will be here adumbrated both in its general bearing, and in its special application to English literature. It is involved in so many difficulties, mostly verbal, that a few preliminary remarks, however trite, may not be amiss.

A symbol is an indirect representation of a thing; not an image of the thing itself, but some other image, whose power is such that when we see it, we do—or may—think of the object. The relation thus implied is not one of similitude or even of direct resemblance, but of analogy. The perception of analogy is an intuitive process of the mind; and the recognition of a symbol is an intuitive inference.

We use the symbolical method for one or other of three reasons, or for all three. First, the mind always finds a pleasure in the exercise of its own subtlety, within limits. Next, the object to be represented may have no distinct features, be too vague for direct presentment. It may be, for instance, an elusive idea of the mind. In such a case, we have recourse generally to an explanation; we convey through many words an abstract sense of the thing. But a presentment, even indirect, is always more vivid, if it can work; it possesses the virtue of concreteness; it is an all-sufficient, an almost immediate revelation; and that is why we sometimes prefer the symbolical method, at the price it demands, of finding a proper equivalent for the object.

The third reason is by no means the least important. The analogy between the symbol and the object includes a margin of difference. So in the very act of recalling

the object, the symbol stresses some of its features at the expense of the others. One aspect of the thing is emphasized—the one the author has in mind. The symbol thus not only suggests the thing meant, but at the same time it reveals the intellectual or emotional bias of the author, as a portrait hardly does, or does against its very aim of being a portrait. By the symbolist method the door is opened wide for the expression of the subjective element in art; that is to say, of lyricism and poetry.

Allegories are an inferior species of symbols, symbols that we recognize by a rather intellectual inference. The analogy at work in them partakes more of resemblance; the meaning is something definite. Inferior varieties of the allegory would be simply children's riddles. Needless to say, "inferiority" here is taken in a purely aesthetic sense.

In symbols of the more interesting class, there is a wider margin of uncertainty; the inference is partly emotional, or more imaginative than intellectual; the whole process is more intuitive; there persists to the end some indefiniteness of meaning. A poetical symbol is a growing, an expansive power; the limit of its significance is not reached at once, is indeed never reached. We have here to do with a pure suggestion, something dynamic; while the allegory is static, and exhausted in the discovery of the thing meant. Symbolism in literature is exclusively concerned with symbols of the latter, the more interesting class.

The use of symbols is, of course, as old as the natural exercise of thought. It began with language; words were originally the symbols of things. A symbolical tendency has been active in the development of religion, philosophy, and art, which are concerned with ideal values. Symbols

were needed to represent the things of the spirit, which are not directly perceived. Mysticism so often had recourse to them that an association was established between the use of symbols and a mystical trend of thought. In literature—the art whose instrument is words—symbols have been rife from the oldest times. But until the modern period, they belonged almost exclusively to the inferior or allegorical kind. A more subtle handling of symbols is to be found, no doubt, in some chapters of ancient or medieval literature; but as a method, that more complex technique grew conscious of itself only at a relatively recent time. It was part of the general process of the discovery of the implicit, which characterizes modern thought.

The Romantic movement prepared the way for that recognition. But the new mode of expression was defined, and received a name, only in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The defining and naming process took place in France, and the fact may well arouse some surprise. If the general course of their literary development previous to that time is considered, the French would seem less likely to have made that discovery than the English or the Germans. But the French are quick at realizing new tendencies; they have a particular gift of setting up programmes, coining formulae, inventing names. . . . And so the *mouvement symboliste* began in France, before it passed on to most of the literatures of the world.

The whole subject of French *symbolisme* is still beset with difficulties. The adepts of the doctrine did not entirely agree in their principles; they diverged still more in their practice. Stronger than the common tenets was the instinct of each individual temperament. Still, the main issue is clear, and we can describe with fair accuracy

what the *symbolistes* were after. They fastened upon the peculiar possibilities of symbols; on the convenient use of them to represent the invisible—subtle ideas and vague things; on their power of suggestion; on the fact that being dynamic, they leave much to our mental activity, open indefinite vistas, start an expansive process of unlimited range. Symbols are the instrument best fitted for the expression of shades of meaning, and of elusive moods, of dreams and imaginings; for the conveyance of the shadowy, unsubstantial, mystical elements of consciousness; and of those famous "correspondences" between impressions of the various senses, to which attention had first been called by Baudelaire.

The *symboliste* group in France succeeded the *Parnasse* —a school of hard pictorial realism, of rigid evocation, instinct with the objective spirit of modern science. The *symbolistes* were the inevitable reaction; they linked up, in the past, with the Romanticism which had receded, but not died; they tried to express evanescent perceptions of the senses, and dim emotions—the subjective, the fluid elements of the mind. Language can lend itself to such a purpose. Words have a definite, a plain nucleus of meaning, the matter-of-fact sense evolved by social life, under the strict, the utilitarian law of intelligibility; in our vocabulary, the original symbolic meaning has most often disappeared. But around each word there lingers an "aura" of more vague and subtle significance; its associations first, its power to reverberate in the mind, awaking the echoes of numberless prior uses by the race, and by the speaker himself; starting trains of thought, calling up other words and images; that power is, as it were, a virtuality, a suggestive force of the word itself, steeped in the subconsciousness of mankind. Next, the sound of the word—that part of

its double being which is less definite and intellectual, more emotional and sensuous. Music is proverbially the most evocative of all arts; and the music of words is their richest evocative force. Again, language lends itself to the shaping and wielding of a still more musical instrument: rhythm, and the melody that is born of the sequence of words; the rich music that grows out of the integration of measure and sounds. Poetical prose, as well as poetry in the stricter sense, can make use, to a large extent, of that rhythm and that melody. So the French *symbolistes* laid repeated stress upon the value of music, and Verlaine wrote:

De la musique avant toute chose. . . .

What did they suggest through music? Not so much mysticism, as vaguely sensuous or morbid moods. That was the accident of circumstance: French *symbolisme* was all mixed up with another movement, "decadence," into which it largely shaded off. Already the end of the century was drawing near; the strain of modern life was felt more and more; the unrest, the rebellion, or even the despair of extreme sophistication, were in the air. The desire to escape through the untried was becoming an obsession with the poets. The French *symbolistes* felt themselves the openers of strange paths, and the prophets of bold experiments, alien to all the traditions of national poetry; of experiments half mystic in a way, but potentially perverse, and revolutionary anyhow. Many of the *symbolistes*, in fact, were "decadents" as well; Brunetière, the defender of orthodoxy, denounced the two sets together; and the lives of some of them were —to say the least—unedifying.

The two waves of influence spread through Europe at the same time; and the association thus created between

them obscured the issue. The mood of artistic rebellion in England clung to the new-fangled principle of symbolism. English literature had a "symbolist" movement, steeped more or less in the perversity of the French school, and in a very complex cosmopolitanism. Even to such a critic as Arthur Symons, who took a broad and philosophical view of it, that movement was inseparable from the example and the practice of the French.

But keeping the word to the sense in which the French *symbolistes* took it, one has good reason to say that they did not create symbolism as a literary method; they only gave it a name, and made it conscious of itself. There had been much symbolism before them, as a spirit more or less diffused in most literatures; there had been a good deal of unrecognized symbolism especially in the English literature of the nineteenth century. The genius of no other poetry shows a broader latent affinity to symbolism than does the English. A passage in a recent book would point to the fact's being at last recognized: "Dans la poésie de Shelley, Coleridge, Rossetti, Browning, Tennyson, il y a une préoccupation de la vie intérieure, de l'au-delà, du sens du mystère, et un effroi devant l'éternité incompréhensible, tout-à-fait en accord avec l'esprit des symbolistes français. E. Schuré, G. Sarrazin, Mallarmé, Verlaine ont puisé dans la richesse des sentiments et des idées qu'offrait cette poésie; ils se sont inspirés de son art de suggestion."[1]

If the symbolist method is essentially that which calls up elusive and most often ideal values, which stresses the emotional and imaginative beyond that surrounds on all sides the hard certainties of facts; then no method better answers to the lyrical and semi-mystic

[1] D. Knowles, *La réaction idéaliste au théâtre depuis 1890*, 1934, p. 42.

preferences which have given the more genuine literature of England some of its prominent characteristics. It is no unfair extension of usage to affix the label of symbolism to that rich literature of evocation and suggestion which can be traced in England ever since the middle ages, and especially for the last century and a half. The lyrical inspiration which is the highest effort of the English genius in the art of words implies a symbolist element; from the outburst of romanticism, that element has been conspicuous. It has been very largely independent of French influence. When the French influence made itself felt in England at the end of the nineteenth century, it found the ground prepared by the latent symbolism of many English writers and poets. It would have been accepted even more widely than it was, but for the associations of the name and of the method in contemporary French poetry. In this deeper sense, it was the English example that favoured the birth of French *symbolisme*, rather than French influence that brought the symbolist spirit to England. The greatest French *symbolistes*, Verlaine and Mallarmé, owed a conscious debt to English poetry. Baudelaire, their immediate precursor, was very largely indebted to an American poet, Edgar Allan Poe. Among their followers, two of the more distinguished—Stuart Merrill and Viélé-Griffin—were English or American born. Symbolism, in France, was almost a freak, or rather, regarded itself as such—though it was really nothing of the kind, if the whole story of French literature, especially the romantic, is studied from that angle; while the corresponding tendency in England was more normal. But to the English writers themselves the new name obscured the issue, and George Moore could honestly believe that he had first planted "Symbolism" upon British soil.

Our effort has been, so far, to dissociate from the historical meaning of symbolism as a method of literary expression, another sense, infinitely wider and freer. But in one direction at least, it is time that a limit should be set to the widening process. Symbolism has not necessarily anything to do with symbols, or symbols with symbolism. A writer may find room in his work for definite symbols, partaking more or less of the nature of allegories, without using that method of expansive suggestion which is the essence of symbolism.

Too definite a symbol, in our view, will lower the poetic value of the symbolism, and eventually destroy it. On the contrary, effective symbolism can very well do without definite, and, so to say, individualized symbols. Symbolist poetry of the highest order may convey a powerful and thrilling suggestion, while its meaning cannot be translated into the hard-and-fast language of ordinary life. The positive-minded reader will say that its meaning is obscure, or that it means just nothing at all; and the positive-minded reader will not be wrong. Therefore, the price the symbolist poet has to pay is that, his appeal being mainly to emotional and imaginative intuition, he is less sure than is the writer who deals in definite symbols. Our response to symbolist poetry is largely individual, and its fuller effectiveness may be restricted to a few. On the other hand, it is more sure in its elementary appeal than any other kind of poetry, because a certain degree of emotional and imaginative sympathy is almost universal.

But is not "symbolism" then a misleading word? Ought it not to be dropped, since it does not exactly mean, in fact, the poetry of symbols, in the received and normal sense of the term? One might look for some other name. The method of symbolism is essentially that of "suggestion;" could something be made out of this?

The difficulty is a familiar one. Most things were given names before they were well known, and we have to put up with much arbitrariness of that kind in language. The French *symbolistes*, when they selected their label, were attracted by the dim mysteriousness of the word "symbol;" but they were not philosophers, or linguists, and did not analyse to its very roots the relation which they emphasized. They have stamped the name "symbolism" upon the common mind; a tradition has thus been created, which it is difficult to go against. Besides, "suggestion" is neither a very frequent, nor a very pleasant word in English; its formerly disagreeable associations died hard; as an indispensable term in the vocabulary of criticism, it has not very long been current. There would be little hope for the word "suggestionism," if one felt inclined to propose it.

* * * * *

It would thus appear that symbols themselves owe their symbolist value, if they have any, to their virtuality and expansiveness. But virtuality and expansiveness are notions which we have good reason to associate with the poetical quality in general. And so the question arises, of the relation between poetry and symbolism. By "poetry," of course, is meant here a spirit, an essence, ordinarily combined with verse, but quite separable from it; found, as the fact is, in a good deal of the other main category of literary expression, "prose," and more or less deficient in a good deal of the literature written in verse.

The relation between poetry and symbolism is altogether simple. The two notions are very close and similar; indeed, they are practically identical. The difference between "symbolist" language, and language that is merely "symbolical," is that the former is steeped

in an essence which is nothing else but the spirit of poetry.

Of defining poetry there is no end. It is not without an apology that one may submit a definition, the claim of which is to be not original, but based on the doctrines of many.

What is it that makes an expression poetical? It is the fact that it possesses, over and above whatever meaning it may have, a power of suggestion. It opens up a vista, starts a motion of the mind, calls up an unlimited, an indefinite series of associations. The consciousness of that activity, that stir, that dynamic quality, the sense of an openness, an indefiniteness of connotation, of an atmosphere that surrounds the hard nucleus of meaning with a bloom of possibilities, is the perception of the poetic. Now that is just the interpretation which was put above upon symbolism in the proper sense.

Let us quote one authority:

> What does poetry mean? This unique expression, which cannot be replaced by any other, still seems to be trying to express something beyond itself. . . . About the best poetry, and not only the best, there floats an atmosphere of infinite suggestion. The poet speaks to us of one thing, but in this one thing there seems to lurk the secret of all. He said what he meant, but his meaning seems to beckon away beyond itself, or rather to expand into something boundless which is only focussed in it; something also which, we feel, would satisfy not only the imagination, but the whole of us; that something within us, and without, which everywhere
>
> makes us seem
> To patch up fragments of a dream,
> Part of which comes true, and part
> Beats and trembles in the heart.[2]

[2] A. C. Bradley, "Poetry for Poetry's Sake," in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 1926, p. 26.

There is an appeal to the imagination in the open, alluring prospect which poetical expression evokes; a stirring monition of uncertainty and promise; an emotion, indeed. The "thrill" of poetry is nothing else; and Professor Housman has vividly rendered that sudden shock; "Poetry," he writes, "seems to be more physical than intellectual."[3] We shall agree that the first impact of the confused mass of associations and suggestions is indeed largely physical; when the shock has time to reverberate through the mind, and to develop its possibilities, that echo is properly intellectual. But shall we all agree to the thesis, that the virtue of expansiveness, of indefinitely open associations, is enough to make poetry?

Let us suppose that a startling scientific proposition, a theorem, a formula, were unexpectedly submitted to a specialist with a strong intellectual imagination. The virtualities of the formula would shape themselves out before his mind's eye; in a flash, a thousand consequences would be dimly descried; he would be thrilled with an emotion to which scientists have often confessed; but would that emotion be poetical? It would, undoubtedly. There is no essential difference between that feeling of intellectual emotion and the pleasure given by philosophical poetry, for instance; or, to tell the truth, by genuine poetry of any kind. A theorem is poetry to the mathematically gifted, and higher mathematics have always been compared by the specialists to an austere sort of poetry. Even if the imaginative part is reduced to almost nothing, and the relations that develop are almost purely abstract, there does linger in the mental process something of the sense of indefinite suggestion and fecundity, which is the essence of poetry.

[3] *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, 1933.

As a consequence, we can find some poetry in the schools of pure intelligence and clear meaning—among the Neo-classic writers of the eighteenth century, for instance. In so far as the latter conform to their doctrine, the modicum of real poetry in them is measured by the suggestiveness of their expression. If it reverberates through the mind, and calls up intellectual echoes; if there is a fecundity in the phrasing, as there is a swing in the rhythm, we enjoy a poetic feeling of a somewhat dry species, akin to that which is roused by a pregnant mathematical formula. But if the statement, like the line, is end-stopped (as will happen most often), we feel no poetry whatever, but only the artistic pleasure of a clever, polished form, elegantly clothing brilliant thoughts.

Even wit should not be entirely ruled out. There is an elasticity, an expansiveness in wit, since more is meant than is said; and the perception of the background of meaning, of the duality or plurality of sense, is akin to the poetical feeling of suggestion; but that is dry poetry indeed. . . . It takes the genius of Shakespeare to make wit truly poetical.

It is a satisfaction, however, that such a notion of poetry should not quite exclude the Neo-classics. But a more important point is that the Neo-classics, in fact, did not conform to their own doctrine very thoroughly. The poets of Pope's age often enough wrote in words that implied a measure of indefinite suggestion, emotional or imaginative.

It would follow that the French *symbolistes* were justified in principle; they had a clear glimpse of the truth. More surely than any other school, they fastened on what is indeed the soul of poetry. Only, at the same time, or ultimately, they confused the issues, and proved

mostly inferior to their own doctrine. Their main error was the pursuit of the so-called "correspondences;" it took them into a by-way, and a blind avenue of literature. There is no particular fecundity in the shifting of the same impression from one sense to another, or in the blurring of the distinction between the senses. What matters is that such shifting and mixing rouses an emotion of somewhat bewildered mysteriousness; and that those relationships cannot be established unless the impressions are a good deal refined, followed up into their minute and rare shades. What the *symbolistes* were after was subtlety in matter and in manner—the conveying of subtle thoughts through a subtle method; that is to say, through suggestion. The "correspondence" theme, when they chose to stake all upon it, led them to strange vagaries and artificial inspiration. But Verlaine and Mallarmé had a much wider outlook, and a safe instinct; the root of the matter was in them—especially in Verlaine, as Mallarmé eventually grew over-intellectual; in their most characteristic pieces, they expressed the apparently inexpressible through the virtue of images, associations, and music. The symbolism—in the wider sense—which they were more or less consciously practising, had always been, unknown to the poets, the very essence of the poetic endeavour as such—in so far as that endeavour is distinct from the search for eloquence, for art, for beauty itself.... And that is why, although there are few poets left who will call themselves symbolists, and the symbolist school is indeed a thing of the past, the spirit of symbolism is as vigorous as ever, and will not die.

Again, an outstanding fact in the history of poetry is that another great school, prior to the *symbolistes*, very largely prefigured their effort, and at all events opened

the way for it. This was the Romantic school. Romanticism (in the purer sense) was simply the more or less confused perception of the very nature of poetry—a perception bewildered, again, by many minor issues; and the romanticism which is eternal—that which permeates, for instance, the larger part of Elizabethan literature—is substantially the sense and the intuition of poetry. The Romantic revival was a revival of poetry; the symbolist movement, which derived from it, was an attempt on parallel lines; secondary differences leave untouched the essential similarity; the aim of one and the other was to achieve poetry in its purer state.

The purer state of poetry—these are dangerous words to write. But indeed the above view of symbolism has committed us to one side in a recent controversy.

Symbolism is essentially the suggestion of the unlimited. Now the unlimited is just our human way of perceiving the infinite. Symbolist poetry evokes and expresses the infinite through the finite; its inner impulse moves it to a recognition of the beyond. The "diffused mysticism" which, a French critic has said, quoting Emerson, is the soul of poetry, has seemed to us the most vital characteristic of symbolism. The poetry of the genuine symbolists has the upward expansiveness, the soaring aspiration, and one may, perhaps, say as well, the indefiniteness of "pure" prayer; its significance is the more pregnant, the more fruitful, for not being enclosed in the hard outline of a rigid meaning; as the upward motion of prayer, the elevation of the soul, is perhaps fully itself only when free from any formulation of desire.

In so far as English literature is concerned, two propositions may have been, if not established by such a brief argument, at least given some support. First,

there was a very great deal of more or less pronounced symbolism, in verse and in prose, from the time of the *Lyrical Ballads*—not to mention earlier ages—to the moment when Baudelaire and Verlaine became living forces in England. Next, the activity of that spirit, independently of any decisive foreign influence (for the influence of German idealism cannot be said to have been at all decisive), should be traced to the innate tendencies of the English genius, brought to a head by the great new birth of the Romantic movement. These would be a strong imaginative bent, an instinctive search for the mutual echoes of things, for the associative play that calls up one object through the other; a fondness for the suggestive expression that starts a process like day-dreaming in the reader's mind; and a sense of values too subtle or mysterious to be conveyed directly, a diffused mysticism, akin in nature to the very essence of the poetic mood.

That those tendencies, being innate and strong, indeed being for all practical purposes characteristic, should still not be predominant to the point of exclusiveness, is the lesson which one may read at a glance, written large over the course of English literature. There have been periods when other psychological needs were stronger and managed to enforce their ascendancy. Poetry, then, moved away from the ideal of indefinite and inexhaustible suggestiveness, to that of perfect definiteness and clear-cut presentment—a didactic, a satirical, or a scientific, at all events an intellectual, ideal. Whether poetry was the better or the worse for that move, is left to the inmost taste of each of us to decide. Our deepest artistic preferences are implied in our choice. If we are to judge from many symptoms, the present moment—but is not the present moment always passing from us?—might be

one of those exceptions. Such poetry as that of Mr. T. S. Eliot, for instance, consciously aims at substituting for the emotional expansiveness of properly "suggestive" expression, the intellectual reverberation of allusiveness. In it there lingers a symbolism still, of a kind; but it is the symbolism of the Neo-classics. We are thus taken back again to the plane on which the "Augustans" thought and wrote in verse. Only, the mind of our age is very far from the clear and simple orderliness of the early eighteenth century; it is crowded with an undigested mass of heterogeneous knowledge and experience, so that Mr. Eliot's allusions reverberate into recondite and mysteriously puzzling echoes. Instead of blurred effects, we get at times total obscurity.

The objection which many contemporary readers apparently feel to the poetry of symbolism—I should be inclined to say, to poetry itself—has its core in the essential vagueness of the presentment which the symbolist method is able to achieve. The issue is really between the conflicting claims of a rich indefiniteness, and a satisfying narrowness of phrasing. How is it that indefiniteness ever could be preferred? To tackle that issue, in our conclusion, will be no digression from the main purpose of this study. It will have the further convenience of allowing us to quote a few examples from the English symbolists of the pre-symbolist time, and somewhat to temper, though at a late stage in the argument, the dry abstraction of its generalities.

Can one in any measure account for the spell which the very imperfection of the symbolist method, as a means of expressing thought, used to cast, and perhaps ever will cast, over the reader? Why should the dimness or vagueness of suggested and incompletely perceived ideas (or emotions) exercise a peculiar fascination upon our minds?

Too much should not be made, first, of the fact that the apprehension of a vague, elusive background of meaning will awake in us an impression somewhat similar to physical dizziness. Such a feeling is not purely disagreeable—although to some of us it is overwhelmingly so, the consequence being that a whole class of readers will by no means put up with suggestion. To others, on the contrary, that state of mind possesses a sort of appeal, and resembles a thrill which in our days mechanical civilization has been a good deal exercised to create. We shall fight shy of defending the symbolist poets by pointing to the popularity of the switchback.

Another cause is more properly psychological and indeed sentimental. We all have in us to-day, more or less, a deep instinctive sense of the virtue that may lie in the spontaneous, untouched elements of our mental being, just because the rational and the familiar ones have been so much stressed by centuries of civilized life. That sense thus links up with the tendency, still present and active, which resulted in the "primitivist" trend of ideas, so important as a source of the Romantic theories of art and society. The fatigue and discouragement born of continued clear thinking (or attempts to think clearly) make us turn to the vague, as to a margin of yet unexplored possibilities, with fresh powers and virtues. The new psychology has been laying stress on the mysteries of the subconscious, and we know that we bear in ourselves a realm of unascertained size, an underground world that may contain much unmined gold and moral wealth, as it is certainly rife with lurking threats and dangers to our self-mastery. There may be, we feel, latent discoveries, unsuspected harvests of possible intuition, in the layers of emotional perception which surround, like a hazy belt, the domain of lucid

thought. So the attraction of the suggestive method is largely that of romanticism itself, revitalized as it has been recently by the powerful tide of the anti-intellectualist movement, all tending to bring back, and press upon our more attentive appreciation, the less rational or irrational forces of our nature.

But there is more in the fascination of symbolism; and the most essential, the most subtle element as well, is one which we cannot entirely analyse, one which we can much less explain. In the suggestive mode of presentment, the data that we actually catch and see stand out, as it were, upon an "aura" of dim visibility; the more solid elements of the suggestion are outlined against a background of indistinct, elusive ideas or emotions; and these again pass off, we feel sure (or else there would be no purpose in the whole process of symbolist writing), into still more vague and distant values, which perhaps we shall not, we are aware, ever more clearly grasp, but which it must be well worth our while to descry even so confusedly. There is thus an element of faith implied in taking symbolist poetry seriously; which is but another way of saying, as we did above, that a diffused mysticism is a corollary of poetry, so that "pure" poetry is truly akin to prayer. . . .

Now, an elementary and an intuitive intimation, in our experience, lends a peculiar spell to all the perceptions in which an image, or a set of images, is outlined against a background that, while remaining indefinite, holds out to us the promise of some attractive quality, such as brightness or depth. We are here striking a particular but very rich vein of imagery, the type of which might be found in the "mystic" contrast dear to so many painters and artists—a glory burning behind some incomplete screen which lets it partly filter through—

as that of sunset behind a copse of trees, with the trunks and branches delineated in dark against the glow. The appeal of such an image can be partly accounted for. A relation is thus established between some direct fact of vision, definite but without any intrinsic interest or value, and, on the other hand, a distant, vague but promising field, which the objects seen incompletely hide, or rather incompletely reveal. From the contrast in which those two different parts are associated, the objects outlined against the far perspective gain more distinctness, and that perspective, conversely, assumes a greater depth and a richer allurement. The whole together makes up what we are forced to call in itself a "symbol"—one that has struck the mind of man, from the origins of art, with peculiar force. It sums up, indeed, in an imaginative whole, the two main elements whose conflict gives the life of man its mixed, incomplete, and puzzling character—the sureness of our short limited knowledge in direct experience on the one hand, and, on the other, the vast uncertainties of the more precious but indefinite promise that filters through our world of sense perception and of science. A fundamental chord of desire, of regret, and of aspiration united, is thus struck in us. This is why the poets and the mystics have set so much store by that symbol; a symbol so pregnant, and, as it were, so central, that it can be said to represent, to symbolize, symbolism itself.

The partiality shown by all medieval painters for a gold ground behind their architectural settings and landscapes can, of course, be traced to that instinctive preference. But the poets of the nineteenth century have expressed it with particular frequency. Wordsworth's *Ode Upon Intimations of Immortality* develops around an image very similar, though slightly different,

that of the light freely seen by the child, which gradually fades away with the growing years behind the "shades of the prison-house." Ruskin, in *Modern Painters*, studies a "child instinct," which "few forget; the emotion . . . caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself . . .;" the sea, here, being just a vast, indefinite, and mysterious background, creating through the imagination and the expectation of its presence a sense of limitless sublimity stronger than its actual sight would give. But Ruskin goes on to say: "I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children . . ., but I have ascertained it to be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for Nature; and I am certain that the modification of it, which belongs to our after years, is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon." And again:

> Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, . . . there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind, . . . but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious, whether all that is dazzling in colour, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark troublous-edged sea.[4]

[4] *Modern Painters*, part III, sec. 1, ch. v, paras. 3 and 4.

And setting himself to discover "that which effects of this kind possess or suggest, peculiar to themselves, and which other effects of light and colour possess not," Ruskin traces the origin of those effects to a suggestion (the verb "to suggest" is used by him again and again) of infinity:

> It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light, . . . that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree and that is,—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of his dwelling-place. For the sky of night, though we may know it boundless, is dark, it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down, but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.[5]

Here Ruskin, who was not only a poet but a searching analyst of beauty, laid his finger on what was to appear gradually, with the progress of time, as the very core of poetry and of symbolism.

Matthew Arnold, in his *Thyrsis*, distinctly associated that mystical "quest" which is the motive of *The Scholar Gipsy*, with the appeal of a privileged, a symbolical image—the tall elm-tree standing out, on the familiar hill-crest near Oxford, against the western light:

> Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
> Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
> The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
>
> And see,
> Back'd by the sunset which doth glorify
> The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
> Bare on its lonely ridge, the tree! the tree![6]

[5] *Ibid.*, para. 5.
[6] *Thyrsis*, ll. 11-3 and 157-60.

Rossetti in the twenty-eighth sonnet of *The House of Life* calls up the same image as a type of the beyond that love always seeks through its own satisfaction:

> As at the end of some deep avenue
> A tender glamour of day. . . .

And Francis Thompson, in the *Ode to the Setting Sun* makes the hill against "the scorching dazzle of heaven" stand "black as life against eternity."

Working independently of the poets, the psychologists, at a more recent date, have laid stress on the peculiar attributes of the potential state, through which our ideas—and our intuitive perceptions as well—pass before they reach the stage of definiteness.[7] That vague incipient or transitory condition, that *état flou*, with its blurred uncertainty of outline, is loved, they point out, by all artists and by all creative thinkers, just because the evolving notion, not having yet attained its final growth, still contains a promise, the possibility of a revelation, of a fresh addition to beauty or to knowledge. Thus is founded psychologically that "fondness for the vague," which is the common trait of all symbolists and of all poets, and which is shared, indeed, by not a few philosophers. The scientist will further remark that the tendency has its dangers; dim perceptions must not be cultivated for their own sake; the lure of the indefinite and the mystic expectation of a golden gleam through the haze will create a habit of mental passiveness, which may injure the creative energy itself. The artist may lose, in that quest, the sense of that measure of distinctness or intelligibility without which art cannot keep in touch with the normal human mind. Turner followed his dream of light suffusing mist to vagaries of the brush; Rossetti, and Mallarmé, have not always kept their

[7] Henriette Gally, *Ruskin et l'esthétique intuitive*, pp. 89-90.

symbolism above the level of inscrutable obscurity. But every method has its drawbacks; and we may well prefer even the perils of suggestion to the sterile flatness of a too definite utterance.

One more point is to be stressed. If the incipient and growing idea is richer—although it is vaguer—than the definite notion, it is because the nucleus of thought, which will eventually solidify into a crystal-like purity, is at first surrounded by a number of accompanying elements—a thick atmosphere, so to say, of half-developed and confused possibilities, of emotional and imaginative states. The intuition at its birth is made up largely of stirring images and of thrills of the heart, before the intellectual relationship appears. Now the value of a symbol is intuitively perceived, and a symbol is indeed an intuition. Just like the philosophical promise, the poetical quality of that intuition must then reside in the nebulous "aura" that envelops it; there, and there only, can the process of open unlimited association, which we regard as the condition of poetry, find its stimulus and its sustenance. We are thus inevitably led to the conclusion that a merely intellectual stir in our minds is not enough to give us the feeling of poetry. The emotional field of the idea must remain attached to it, and be included in the suggestion; or else, we have the "dry" suggestiveness of the Metaphysical poets, and of the "conceit." Browning, most readers agree, did not take that lesson enough to heart; it was too often ignored as well by Mallarmé; it is being often ignored by Valéry and by T. S. Eliot—if these two names indeed can be mentioned in the same breath.

By far the greater number of English symbolists have not been tempted to ignore it. In verse or in prose, the writers whose detailed study should bear out the above

remarks have, almost without an exception, given us symbols as they rose, fresh from their birth in the imagination, and with rich resonances of emotion still echoing all round them. No wonder that it should be so: it is a distinctive feature of the English mind, a critic has remarked,[8] that it should prefer to perceive the object with the wealth of diffused spiritual elements—feelings, fancies, dreams—which gather from the first around its image in the consciousness, and are so inseparably associated with it in our concrete experience that they remain to the visionary, to the poet, to the mystic—and perhaps to the truly objective observer as well—part and parcel of its very being. Symbolist poetry has thus one of its privileged homes in England, like emotional painting, and visionary idealism.

In the above pages, values are stressed as lasting and indeed permanent, which the predominant critical fashions of to-day would rather rule out as transitory and stale. Of that deep-laid disagreement, none can be more fully aware than the present writer. But it is with unabashed persistence that he tries to preserve in himself, against the strong prejudices of our time, what are perhaps more than the illusions of yesterday. Our modes will be passing; the spirit of symbolism is eternal. The confused and jarring expressions of our "modern" poets, romanticists most often in spite of themselves, are poetical only, one can say with confidence, in so far as they manage to convey that expansive sense of an emotional growth from the plain idea and the plain word, over and above their hard and dry meaning, which the symbolists of the nineteenth century did emphasize, and which remains the essential element of any poet's utterance.

[8] A. Chevrillon, *La pensée de Ruskin*, pp. 59-60.

WILLA CATHER AND THE WEST

E. K. Brown

I

THE appearance of *Lucy Gayheart* (1935) marks Miss Cather's return to her greatest subject—the West, the clash in the West between the grandeur of the land and large natures in sympathy with it, on the one hand, and, on the other, the meanness of the towns and those among their people who are provincial and shrewd. The three short stories collected in 1932 under the title *Obscure Destinies* indicated that Miss Cather was preparing to return to the West. When in one of these stories she refers to a little Colorado town as "a snappy little Western democracy, where every man was as good as his neighbour and out to prove it," we recognize the comment as by the same hand which drew the town of Black Hawk in *My Antonia* (1918); and when, in another, she presents a Bohemian family in which the prevailing spirit, warm, generous, magnanimous, had been created by a man who had suffered in London and New York and then found serenity and harmony on a Nebraska farm, we recognize even more clearly the author of *O Pioneers!* (1913). A full-length novel was needed to assure us that the return was not merely episodic; and *Lucy Gayheart* is as similar to the early Western novels as any one of these is to any other.

From the West—that is, from Nebraska and Colorado—Miss Cather broke away in *The Professor's House* (1925) and moved farther and farther in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927) and *Shadows on the Rock* (1931). Closely considered, these three novels disclose important

points of contact with the earlier works: the same formula of heroism, the same subtle and illuminating sense of a relation, a fundamental likeness, between the influence of the frontier in its purest expressions and the influence of mellow traditional civilizations. Still the later works, for all the quiet richness of their emotion, or the perfect movement of their narrative, are not completely satisfying to one steeped in *The Song of the Lark* (1915), *My Antonia*, and *A Lost Lady* (1923). It is not because they are historical novels and their glamour seems less substantial, less vigorous, than the subdued glow of the earlier novels. It is not because their style has been refined and modulated until it is a little artificial. What is dissatisfying is that New Mexico and New France are not Miss Cather's country as Colorado and Nebraska are. The mysterious but sustained power of the earlier Western novels was an emanation from the land. When Miss Cather parts from this land, "the grand passion of my life" as she calls it, she retains much, her style, her art, her sense of heroism: but the essence of her power, an essence so fine that it almost resists definition, she cannot retain.

Lucy Gayheart is an attempt to recapture this essence: here once more we find a close and subtle presentation of distinguished and fine character and a poetic evocation of the Western land. The heroine is brought before us as a person whose essence, a fine animated charm, is less an individual thing than an expression in a human character of the electric air and broad vivid spaces of Nebraska. Her voice had in it "a ring of truth" that not even so great a singer as Clement Sebastian could define; even her laugh had an intense reality; in both something deeper than the girl herself found expression. All in her life that really mattered—and in this she represents

the whole company of Miss Cather's heroic characters—occurred on a level so far below the surface of visible successes and failures that to most observers nothing at all seemed to occur to her until Clement Sebastian was drowned in Lake Como and Lucy in the little river that ran just beyond her Nebraska town. "Some people's lives," as Miss Cather says, "are affected by what happens to their person or their property; but for others fate is what happens to their feelings and their thoughts —that and nothing more." On the deep level of her real life two experiences befall Lucy Gayheart, each of them infinitely more important than Sebastian's death or her own—she loves Sebastian and she loves Harry Gordon.

For both men the love she feels is almost impersonal. Sebastian's voice, as he sings a mournful song of Schubert, reveals to her an aspect of reality for which no words, no colours, could be an adequate medium. The subtlest of all arts is the appropriate vehicle for its communication. "She was struggling with something she had never felt before. A new conception of art? It came closer than that. A new kind of personality? But it was much more. It was a discovery about life, a revelation of love as a tragic force, not a melting mood, of passion that drowns like black water. As she sat listening to this man the outside world seemed to her dark and terrifying, full of fears and dangers that had never come close to her until now." Sebastian's love for Lucy is impersonal in the same sense. In a restless, wandering life he had lost beyond recovery "the deepest of all companionships, a relation with the earth itself, with a countryside and a people. That relationship, he knew, cannot be gone after and found: it must be long and deliberate, unconscious. It must indeed be a way

of living." In Lucy's simplicity and animation he finds an expression of what he has missed, so powerful that companionship with her can give, at least for a time, the serenity and balance which she had acquired in her long, unconscious relationship with the Western land.

The land is not so vividly described, its formative power is not so emphasized, as in *The Song of the Lark* and *My Antonia*: it will, accordingly, be proper to explore the full meaning of the land rather in touching on these novels than at this point. In *Lucy Gayheart* the meaning of the land is most clearly revealed in the character of Harry Gordon. In Harry there are coarse and mean elements, the shrewd calculating hardness of the pioneer turned banker, the cocksureness of the successful provincial, the streak of moral vulgarity which allows him to reduce the relation between Lucy and Sebastian to a common flirtation between music-teacher and pupil, the naïve realism which makes him insist that "facts are at the bottom of everything." It is late in the novel before Lucy or the reader appreciates the element of greatness in Harry, perceiving that: "He knew the world better than anyone else here, he had some imagination. He rose and fell, he was alive, he moved. He was not anchored, he was not lazy, he was not a sheep. Conceited and canny he was most days of the month; but on occasion something flashed out of him. There was a man underneath all those layers of caution: he wasn't tame at the core." By his moral vulgarity, by being at a critical moment a small-town soul, he lost Lucy. Not even that loss, not even a tedious marriage of convenience and spite, not even year upon year of hard-fisted banking, could destroy the deeper, purer element of greatness. Nothing could spoil and tame him completely; indeed the purer, authen-

tically Western element flashed out more and more frequently as he grew older. In the closing scene of the novel, at the Gayheart house from which all the Gayhearts have passed to the cemetery, Harry's cashier "was unpleasantly reminded that there was and always had been something not quite regular about his chief; something fantastic, which he was secretly afraid of." The fantastic something which inspired fear in the perfect provincial, which had survived and grown and vanquished, is the elusive spirit which scarcely bears speaking of and which is at the centre of all the Western novels of Miss Cather, and the source of their greatness.

II

In the air of Colorado, Miss Cather observes, "the blood warms and quickens to meet the dry cold." "Under the general keying up of the altitude, manners take on a heartiness, a vivacity that is one expression of the half-unconscious excitement which Colorado people miss when they drop into lower strata of air. The heart, we are told, wears out early in that high atmosphere but while it pumps, it sends out no sluggish stream." To the end of her life, despite her experience of the best in New York and Europe, in music and in love, the deepest desire, the most haunting dream of Thea Kronborg, the heroine in *The Song of the Lark*, was of Colorado in spring, of its desert sands with mica dazzling the eye, of its snow-storms which removed all landmarks from the countryside. News of such things as these never failed to make her heart beat more quickly, to bring out the strongest purest notes her voice could reach. If the Western air gives buoyancy, the Western land gives intensity and largeness of spirit. The land is "the great fact," a fact so powerful as to "overwhelm the little

beginnings of human society that struggled in its sombre wastes."

"Its fierce strength, its peculiar savage kind of beauty" appals the weak into flight and shrivels the souls of the mean. One farmer gives up his land to become a baker's assistant in Chicago, another to return to his job as a cigar-cutter in St. Louis; Antonia's husband is held back from flight only because his wife is dearer to him than all else and she cannot conceive of life away from Nebraska. The West is no place for men like these, and they know it. Antonia's husband, full of garish memories of Vienna and New York, is "pretty near running away" when he reads the newspapers; he never loses his nostalgia for crowds, finery, and shrill excitement; at times he "near goes crazy with lonesomeness." It is one of the measures of Antonia's greatness that she is able to hold him fast "in one of the loneliest countries in the world."

Along with the weak Miss Cather studies the mean: she has no illusions as to the prevailing average of intelligence and character in Western towns. Mrs. Livery Johnson, for example, so called because there were many Johnsons in Moonstone and her husband kept a stable, exists to win victories for the Baptists in their deadly rivalry with the Methodists; and Lily Fisher, her *protégée* and Thea Kronborg's vocal rival, "was the angel child of the Baptists and looked exactly like the beautiful children on soap-calendars. Her pink and white face, her set smile of innocence was surely born of a color press. She had long drooping eyelashes, a little pursed-up mouth, and narrow pointed teeth, like a squirrel's." What Western towns make of their Lily Fishers, Miss Cather suggests in the same novel in portraying Dr. Archie's wife. Mrs. Archie when she

arrived from Michigan had been pretty; but once married and settled in Moonstone, she knew no reason why she should preserve her good looks. She had been interesting to talk to, but she now knew no reason why she should talk at all. What was the use of preparing meals? Or of being civil to one of Dr. Archie's friends? No matter how good one's meal or one's welcome was to-day, to-morrow one would have to prepare another. "Within a few years she looked as small and mean as she was." Her conception of the good life was to get her husband away to Denver, live on canned salmon, and keep the house sealed against dust from morning to night. By poetic justice she met her death by an explosion of gasoline in a house where the air never changed.

Finer souls than Mrs. Livery Johnson and Mrs. Archie disintegrate in the West. Perhaps the most moving of Miss Cather's stories is *A Lost Lady*. In the gray little town of Sweet Water, on the Burlington between Omaha and Denver, Marian Forrester's charm and vivacity were "lost." So long as she could go away with her husband for the winters and attract as house-guests people from Chicago and California, she was happy and admirable. But with her husband an invalid and his money gone, with her life strictly limited to Sweet Water, her secret weaknesses began to control her, her love of brandy and brutal men. Her husband's death completed her moral disintegration; and the young man who tells the story sadly reflects: "He had helped the Captain to die peacefully, he believed; and now it was the Captain who seemed the reality. All those years he had thought it was Mrs. Forrester who made that home so different from any other. But ever since the Captain's death it was a house where old friends like his uncle were betrayed and cast off, where

common fellows behaved after their kind and knew a common woman when they saw her." Captain Forrester could live happily at Sweet Water: he had quiet strength, a clear sense of the real, the power to dream, a deep feeling for the country. But the Captain is one of Miss Cather's heroes.

If the West diminishes and vulgarizes so many, it adds cubits to the stature of the novelist's heroes and heroines, Thea Kronborg and Antonia Shimerda, Alexandra Bergson and Claude Wheeler, Tom Outland and the Vicar-General. These are the pioneers, they alone are adequate to the demands of the country, without the country they would be mediocre,—if without it they could exist at all.

As boy and girl, the hero and heroine of *O Pioneers!*, Carl Lindstrum and Alexandra Bergson, were of the same fine texture, superior to all the others on the Divide. Before he was twenty Carl followed his father to St. Louis; and passed the next twenty years as an anonymous all-too-dispensable cog in the industrial machinery of great cities. At forty he returned to the Divide, diffident, unstable, unhappy, to find an Alexandra in whose radiant robust expansion the land had played the greatest part. She knew its powers as no other farmer did: she was the first to plant alfalfa, the first to sow wheat, the first to build a silo, the first to buy land in vast acreages. Her success came from an apprehension of the land, not dissimilar in its mysterious divining power, to the apprehension of what music may be drawn from an instrument or what design from a combination of colours. In her calm, in her seriousness, in her intuitive harmony with the land, she is Miss Cather's earliest study, on a large scale, for the heroic pioneer.

A more elaborate study is that of Antonia Shimerda. Between *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia*, Miss Cather wrote *The Song of the Lark*, the first book in which she revealed the full depth and subtlety of her insight into character. The mark of that novel, of the town in which the early chapters are laid, of the contrast between native and foreign temperaments which runs through it, of the heroine Thea Kronborg, is visible in *My Antonia*. Alexandra Bergson has both force and distinction; but both are somewhat blurred—we believe in her force and distinction rather than perceive them. In *My Antonia*, as in *O Pioneers!*, suggestion indeed plays a rôle; just as the calm eyes and firm stride of Alexandra are stressed at the outset, the strong peasant build of Antonia, the rich colouring of her cheeks, her violent glance, are impressed upon us in the early chapters. More effective is the brief suggestion of her voice; it was deep, a little husky, and one always heard her breath vibrating. "Everything she said seemed to come right out of her heart." She has the powerful nature of the land on which she lives and from which she cannot part.

But Miss Cather tries to indicate more exactly what it was in this girl which led a great corporation lawyer to look back over thirty years to his youthful intimacy with Antonia as the supreme experience of his life and to find in her the purest incarnation of what was precious in the West. Her greatness did not lie in intellect or practical ability or character, in any usual sense of that word; it was the source of her vigour and her generosity of spirit and her aspiration, but it was none of these. It was a personal, "unconscious" thing, far beyond her control or comprehension. In her maturity, as the mother of ten children, living a hard life on a not too fruitful farm, "she still had that something which fires the

imagination, could still stop one's breath by a look or gesture, that somehow elevated the meaning in common things. She had only to stand in the orchard, to put her hand on a little crab-tree and look up at the apples, to make you feel the goodness of planting and tending and harvesting at last."

To discover exactly—or as exactly as so evasive an essence admits of discovery—what the source of Antonia's power and fineness is, we must turn to the much more articulate character of Thea Kronborg, a character which, after twenty years, remains the most ambitious of Miss Cather's achievements, and the most moving, if not the most beautiful. In Thea, Miss Cather has drawn a woman who, unlike Alexandra and Antonia, becomes great in a sense appreciable by anyone; and the novelist's focus of interest is in showing not so much the development of her greatness as its relation to the land in which she grew up and which she left a comparative failure. Thea is great by her voice, and the greatness of that voice is an expression of that which is great in the West. Even as a small girl, when the piano claimed her time and her enthusiasm, the voice was there, "a nature-voice breathed from the creature and apart from language, like the sound of the wind in the trees or the murmur of water," a voice as true and real as Lucy Gayheart's, but with incomparably greater power and depth. Any mention of her voice drove Thea into a fury of resentment; and she could feel happy and at ease only when she was with those from whose imperviousness to its magic no allusion to the voice was conceivable. She knew in an obscure inexpressible way that her voice required for its development the same kind of secrecy in which wheat germinates under ground. She knew, too, that somehow the voice throve on visions

of "sand dunes where the prickly pear was in blossom and the green lizards raced each other in the glittering light." Wunsch, the old music-teacher in Moonstone, never could explain to himself Thea's uniqueness: it expressed itself both in her will and in her imagination, but lay deeper than either. In his last comment, hopeless of otherwise indicating what he obscurely apprehended, he likened her to "the yellow prickly pear blossoms that open there in the desert; thornier and sturdier than the mardi flower he remembered, not so sweet but wonderful." The source of her power as a singer was just as perplexing to the pianist with whom she subsequently studied in Chicago. She could do nothing until the essence of a song had revealed itself to the strange element in her nature with which no one else, and indeed not even Thea herself, could communicate. When this master-faculty was active "her hair was yellower, her skin whiter, her cheeks pinker, as if a lamp had suddenly been turned up inside her." "When she does get an idea," Harsangi, the music-teacher, reflects, "it fills her up to the eyes."

After a year in Chicago, Thea returned to Colorado. Dvorak's symphony in E minor, a picture of a prairie girl in early morning listening, in a peasant's pose, to the song of a lark, words uttered by Aldor Harsangi, had all sharpened her power of understanding her gift and enabling it to find expression. On the Denver express, as she looked out over the Western land, she was able to see more clearly than before the concord between her genius and the essential quality of the country in which she had grown up, "a country without fences, rough rocks, or forests to confine one's view or one's motions." "It was over flat lands like this, stretching out to drink the sun, that the larks sang—and one's

heart sang there too . . . there was a new song in that blue air which had never been sung in the world before." This was where her voice had come from, from this "naïve generous country that gave one its joyous force, its large-hearted childlike power to love, just as it gave one its coarse brilliant flowers." The essence of the West was as refractory to formulation in words as the essence of her own genius—"for it had nothing to do with words: it was like the light of the desert at noon or the smell of the sage after rain."

What Thea had yet to perceive with the proper clarity was the difference between the West of which her voice was an organ and the West of the narrow ugly minds of Moonstone. Her West was an older and broader West on which towns were blotches. She had always felt such a difference: the people she valued most in Moonstone were those whom Moonstone repudiated or those it couldn't hold—old Wunsch, the drunken music-teacher, Johnny Tellamantez, a Mexican who outraged proprieties even more sacred than temperance, Ray Kennedy whose spirit had been formed by the spaces and colours of the South-west and meditation on the cliff-dwellers.

The cliff-dwellers! Their villages were the appropriate communities for the Western land. It was during a summer spent in one of their villages in Arizona that Thea came to a perfect understanding of her genius. "She had clung fast to whatever was left of Moonstone in her mind. No more of that! The cliff-dwellers had lengthened her past. She had older and higher obligations." In *The Professor's House* and in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, as we shall see, the villages of the cliff-dwellers will play as significant a part: they are, for Miss Cather, the symbol of the beauty and greatness

of the American past, the standard by which she condemns the ugliness of modern towns and villages and the pettiness of the people who live in them. At the end of the novel, already a great singer at the Metropolitan in New York, Thea bursts out: "I don't know if I'd ever have got anywhere without Panther Canyon. How did you know that was the one thing to do for me? . . . Do you know what they really taught me? They taught me the inevitable hardness of human life. No artist gets far who doesn't know that. And you can't know it with your mind. You have to realize it in your body, somehow; deep. It's an animal sort of feeling. I sometimes think it's the strongest of all." The splendour and fullness of Thea's voice was the perfect expression of a personality, formed by large and solemn things, not simply by thoughts or emotions but by direct intuitions of the nature of life. As one listened to her sing, one's predominant reaction was not that of admiration for an organ perfectly developed and perfectly employed, or that of delight in a succession of emotions mirroring exactly those of the composer: it was that of direct contemplation of all in one's experience which had brought one near to sun-swept plains and deserts and to an idea of life, solemn, religious, enduring. Such an effect could be compassed only by a personality which, by prolonged contacts with unlimited things, had passed beyond normal limits and therefore could appear to have passed beyond all limits.

III

Alexandra, Antonia, Thea, all are of foreign blood; and it is Miss Cather's view that in the European peoples there are natures more receptive to the spirit of the West than are commonly found among Anglo-Saxon Americans.

In a bitter passage she opposes the Anglo-Saxon American girls of small Western towns to the foreign girls from the surrounding country, girls upon whom even the petty ways of the towns can make no damaging impress. It was an unquestioned tenet in the social creed of the townsfolk that the merchants' daughters were refined and that the country girls were not. The merchants' daughters lived in an oppressively narrow routine, "stayed indoors in winter because of the cold, and in summer because of the heat," did nothing, felt nothing, thought nothing which was not in the routine; and "the boys looked forward to marrying the girls and living in a brand-new little house with best chairs that must not be sat upon and hand-painted china that must not be used." "Our young man of position was like the son of a royal house; the boy who swept out his office or drove his delivery wagon might frolic with the jolly country girls, but he himself must sit all evening in a plush parlor where conversation dragged so perceptibly that the father often came in and made blundering efforts to warm up the atmosphere." The foreign girls from the farms were beautiful, intensely alive, large in their impulses and emotions, strong in will and clear in mind. But "if I told my school-mates that Lena Lingard's grandfather was a clergyman and much respected in Norway, they looked at me blankly. What did it matter? All foreigners were ignorant people who couldn't speak English." The young men of position—to adopt the town's phrase—might look longingly at Lena or Antonia, aware, in spite of all, of their beauty and vitality; they might even risk a dance or a kiss, but "the respect for respectability was stronger than any desire in Black Hawk youth;" and they kept to their Black Hawk girls and the plush drawing-rooms, mag-

netized by a local ideal by whose operation "people's speech, their voices, their very glances became furtive and repressed, every natural appetite bridled by caution."

The life of the Western towns is the antithesis of that essential West for which Miss Cather cares so deeply, the West of the land, of the cliff-dwellers' villages, of Antonia's heart and Thea Kronborg's voice. The tragedy of her vision of America is in the destruction of the true West by the false; and it is to this destruction that the last of the pioneer novels, *One of Ours* (1922) and *A Lost Lady*, are devoted.

Captain Daniel Forrester is, with Tom Outland in *The Professor's House*, the only Anglo-Saxon American who is on the spiritual level of Alexandra, Antonia, and Thea. Like Thea Kronborg he has played a large part on a large stage: he has built railroads, he has opened up a new country. He dreamed his house on the hill near Sweet Water—and it was built; he dreamed railroads across deserts and mountains—and they were built. He dreamed them in the depths of a vigorous, quietly imaginative soul; and, as he says in his confession of faith: "a thing that is dreamed of in the way I mean is already an accomplished fact." Just so Thea could claim: "When I went to Chicago that first time I carried with me the essentials, the foundations of all that I do now. The point to which I could go was scratched in me then. I haven't reached it yet, by a long way." Captain Forrester, despite his ponderous clumsiness of speech and of manner, left on everyone not shrivelled or envious an impression of power: "His clumsy dignity covered a deep nature, and a conscience that had never been juggled with. His repose was that of a mountain. When he laid his fleshy thick-fingered

hand upon a frantic horse, an hysterical woman, an Irish workman out for blood, he brought them peace; something they could not resist. . . . His sanity asked nothing, claimed nothing; it was so simple that it brought a hush over distracted creatures."

The great psychological achievement of the novel is the steady unemphasized representation of Forrester's knowledge of his wife: mobile, brilliant, full of strange fancies and strange needs, she lived and expanded only by Forrester's silent, almost unrecognized, comprehension and unvaryingly apt and hidden direction. The boy who tells the story realized only after the Captain's death how clearly Forrester had seen into the nature of his wife, more clearly by far than she herself ever could. It was the heavy man with set phrases and massive ideas who had the subtle essence of Miss Cather's West, not the animated electric personality of his wife.

More than the foreign girls Captain Forrester is erected into a symbol; and as an antithesis Miss Cather has created Ivy Peters, an expression of the new West—the West which occupies almost the whole scene of *One of Ours*—a cheap shyster, noisy, rude, impudent and cruel, the concentration of all that is worst in Thea's Moonstone, in Antonia's Black Hawk:

> The Old West had been settled by dreamers, great-hearted adventurers, who were unpractical to the point of magnificence: a courteous brotherhood, strong in attack but weak in defence, who could conquer but who could not hold. Now all the vast territory they had won was to be at the mercy of men like Ivy Peters, who had never dared anything, never risked anything. They would drink up the mirage, despoil the morning freshness, root out the great brooding spirit of freedom, the generous easy life of the great landholders. The space, the colour, the princely carelessness of the pioneer they would destroy and cut up into profitable bits, as the match factory splinters the primeval forest.

All the way from the Missouri to the mountains this generation of shrewd young men, trained to petty economies by hard times, would do exactly what Ivy Peters had done when he drained the Forrester marsh.

Claude Wheeler, the hero of *One of Ours*, lives in a world of men and women such as Ivy Peters. In his despair, one afternoon on the steps of the Capitol at Denver, he looked about abstractedly and noted: "The statue of Kit Carson on horseback, down in the square, pointed Westward; but there was no West, in that sense, any more. . . . Here the sky was like a lid shut down over the world." Only by enlistment in the A.E.F. does Claude find a significant and satisfying destiny. Somehow he came to feel that the Germans were a nation strangely similar to the new breed of farmers and bankers who were ruining the West. The guns of the French and their allies stirred in him "a feeling of confidence and safety," impossible at first to account for. "No battlefield or shattered country," he felt sure, "was as ugly as this world would be if men like his brother Bayliss controlled it altogether." The conviction came to him, as he aided in repelling the German invaders, that "the future of the world was safe; that careful planners would never be able to put it into a strait-jacket,—cunning and prudence would never have it to themselves." He died and escaped disillusion.

Nothing could more powerfully suggest the tragedy in the disappearance of the old West than the need of the one personage in the novel who is in harmony with it to leave America, in the quest of something which would bear a likeness to what in time past the West had been—to die happy only because he believed "his own country better than it was, and France better than any country can ever be."

IV

Claude Wheeler's flight from the West, from the plains of Nebraska, was followed by his creator's. With the victory of Ivy Peters and his like, her West vanishes; the West of Ivy Peters we can find in the novels of Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Miss Cather turned to the study of the American past—to the French *régime* in *Shadows on the Rock*, to the deeds of French and Spanish missionaries in the South-west in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, to the ancient civilization of the cliff-dwellers in *The Professor's House*.

In the earliest of these three novels, *The Professor's House*, she takes as her central theme what in *The Song of the Lark* had been a significant *motif*—the power of contact with the vestiges of the cliff-dwellers to invigorate and enrich a large but only half-awakened nature. Tom Outland is, among her heroes, the one who approaches most closely the firm, intense, severe nature of Thea Kronborg. His voice, his eyes, his bearing are the masculine analogues of hers; and his experience in the canyons of the South-west is, in essence, what hers had been.

At first what struck him, as he looked up towards the village of stone set in a deep cavern, was its beauty, the beauty of sculpture, symmetrical and powerful and in "immortal repose." An aesthetic admiration rapidly developed into a moral. The people who had built themselves so beautiful and so retired a home must have had qualities far beyond the gamut of the villagers of Black Hawk and Moonstone. As an old French missionary puts it, in a letter to Outland: "Like you I feel a reverence for this place. Wherever humanity has made that hardest of all starts and lifted itself out of

mere brutality, is a sacred spot. Your people were cut off here without the influence of example or emulation, with no incentive but some natural yearning for order and security. They built themselves into this mesa and humanized it." Breathless from his discovery, Outland travelled to Washington. After kicking his feet in the antechambers of the Indian Commission for several days, he was admitted to the commissioner only to be told that that gentleman's "business was with living Indians, not dead ones," and to be sent to the Smithsonian. There, despite a superficial interest on the part of the director and his associates, nothing was done —because they were all pulling wires to secure a free trip to an International Exposition in Europe. "They don't care much about dead and gone Indians. What they do care about is going to Paris, and getting another ribbon on their coats." The only person in Washington who cared deeply about the cliff-dwellers, by an irony reminiscent of Claude Wheeler's destiny, was a penniless *attaché* of the French Embassy.

Whatever the follies of Washington might be, Outland's personality had been regenerated by the village he had discovered on the mesa. The magic worked in him as it had in Thea Kronborg. He did not look on the houses and the pottery and the jewels as a curious spectator. "For me the mesa was no longer an adventure but a religious emotion. I had read of filial piety in the Latin poets and I knew that was what I felt for this place." These were Outland's spiritual ancestors, from them he was to draw the richest stimuli for his personal life, and that life led him to intellectual discoveries and moral heroism, to the invention, as it happened, of a vacuum which "revolutionized aviation," and to a death in the Foreign Legion. He followed Claude Wheeler's

path to escape, the only path, Miss Cather suggests, that was open to one who was at odds with the new West. "He had made something new in the world—and the rewards, the meaningless conventional gestures, he had left to others."

It is not the Archbishop but his Vicar-General, Father Vaillant, who is of the same stuff as Miss Cather's earlier heroes and heroines. Born and ordained in the south of France, arriving in Santa Fé ignorant of the Indian languages and of Spanish, as well as of all the ways of the people—Mexicans and Navajos—credulous, violent, exacting, Father Vaillant succeeded by a subtle personal power sufficient to every emergency. As in a moment of annoyance he remarks: "Down there it is work for the heart, for a particular sympathy, and none of our new priests understand those poor natures as I do. I have almost become a Mexican. . . . I am *their* man." No one could resist his passionate love for New Mexico or the designs to which it persuaded him. All that was most individual and precious in Father Vaillant came to full expression in his audience with the Pope. He brought in two valises of religious articles to be blessed instead of the usual one; he begged extraordinary blessings for them; he stayed three times as long as was decorous; and finally, "Father Vaillant caught up his two valises himself, the Chamberlain not being there at the moment, and thus laden was bowing himself backward out of the presence, when the Pope rose from his chair and lifted his hand, not in benediction but in salutation, and called out to the departing missionary, as one man to another, '*Coraggio, Americano!*'"

Americano! Yes, Father Vaillant was that. He had become entirely a part of his new country. Reverence for the glorious history of the Spanish friars in the Southwest, deep affection and regard for the ways of the Indians

and the peons, complete devotion to the needs of New Mexico, had so acted upon his personality that the French priest was more richly American, more open to the essence of the West, than anyone else in the immense diocese of Santa Fé.

The Archbishop, for all his achievements, his almost inspired comprehension of the Navajos, his tact in coping with long-rooted heresies, his cathedral built to resemble those he knew and loved in Southern France, never established a complete harmony with the New World. Scholarly, aristocratic, elegant, responsive to every beauty and every piety, he had left much of his heart in Clermont-Ferrand. Even at the end of his life, although he prefers to remain at Santa Fé rather than return to France, his allegiance is divided. Father Vaillant Miss Cather brings to life without apparent effort; with the Archbishop her success bears the marks of struggle and is not complete—he lives as Euclide Auclair lives in *Shadows on the Rock*, in a shadowy half-life.

The Quebec of 1700, evoked in that novel, attracts Miss Cather for the same reasons as New Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century or the West in the period of expansion and immigration. It is the theatre in which a great psychological drama is played, the drama of adaptation to a new world which has the power to quicken life in the great, to confuse it in the petty, and to strangle it in the weak.

Euclide Auclair, if without a trace of pettiness, is a weak man: he belonged in his little apothecary's shop on the Quai des Célestins in the centre of Paris; and after forty years in Quebec he was still an expatriate, a "misfit." Miss Cather has an affection for his cultivation, rectitude, politeness, as for the similar excellences of the Archbishop and Antonia's father. All three are men

who, happy in their former niches in the Old World, never freely open themselves to the influence of the New. Frontenac and Laval, and, above all, Pierre Charron, are the true "Canadians" of the novel and the true heroes of Miss Cather. As Auclair looked out from the rock of Quebec over the forests on the far shore he could imagine only "an uncharted continent choked with interlocking trees, living, dead, half-dead, their roots in bogs and swamps, strangling each other in a slow agony that had lasted for centuries." All he could discover in the great wilderness was that "the forest was suffocation, annihilation; there European man was quickly swallowed up in silence, distance, mould, black mud and the stinging swarms of insect life that bred in it." Canada could never be for him what the Ile Saint-Louis and the Quai des Célestins had been; a reassuring habitat, tranquil and gray like his own shrewd and temperate soul.

Canada is for men like Pierre Charron, who, to Auclair and his wife, "had seemed the type they had come so far to find; more than anyone else he realized the romantic picture of the free Frenchman of the great forests which they had formed at home on the bank of the Seine." As Auclair's daughter grew up, her father held her devotion and quiet affection, but that in her which was Canadian, which, despite her French birth made her feel that the rock of Quebec and the great unknown forests that girt it, were her home, drew her more intimately to Mgr Laval and to Pierre Charron. Mgr Laval could calm her fears and excitements: he had the strange power of Daniel Forrester and Antonia,—"merely sitting beside the Bishop had given her an escape from her own thoughts. His nature was strong of its kind and different from that of anyone else she knew." And in the day of Frontenac's death it is not the presence of her father but the arrival of Pierre

Charron which reassures her: "He had not a throne behind him like the Count . . . not the authority of a parchment and seal. But he had authority and a power which came from knowledge of the country and its people; from knowledge and from a certain kind of passion."

In a recollection of her childhood in Nebraska, Miss Cather remarks: "I have never found any intellectual excitement more intense than I used to feel when I spent a morning with one of these pioneer women at her baking or butter-making. I used to ride home in the most unreasonable state of excitement. I always felt as if they had told me so much more than they said. . . ." The feeling that a character has suggested so much more than he has said is the highest pleasure to be derived from Miss Cather's fiction. The feelings at the base of her fiction are always feelings that language is ill adapted to express; and she seldom makes the error of trying to state them in the clarity of conceptual terms. She prefers to leave them in much of their appropriate mystery, allowing them to insinuate themselves subtly, naturally, into the minds of those readers who are attuned to receive them. The most mysterious and the most powerful of all her feelings is her feeling for the West. "When I strike the open plains," she says, "something happens, I'm home. I breathe differently. That love of great spaces, of rolling open country like the sea,—it's the grand passion of my life." The New France of *Shadows on the Rock* was marked, as she says, by "a kind of feeling about life and human fate that I could not accept wholly;" and that novel inevitably lacks the strange intensity of conviction of the great Western novels that preceded it—and of *Lucy Gayheart* which is, one hopes, but the first of a new series of explorations of the Western land and soul.

PURITY AND PROPAGANDA IN ART

A. F. B. Clark

THE Demon of the Absolute presides sardonically over our age. The eternal tendency of the human spirit towards polarity (in popular language "to go to extremes") has been extended from the ordinary affairs of life to the higher spheres of politics and philosophy. One must be either a hundred per cent. Nationalist or an Internationalist, a Capitalist or a Communist, a belated Victorian or an anticipatory Utopian, a Neo-Humanist or a Naturalist, a believer in "pure science" or "applied science." Every phase of human activity is regarded as having a positive or a negative pole, around one of which all self-respecting particles feel it their duty to collect. In the intellectual sphere the tendency takes the form of assigning narrow and exclusive fields to certain kinds of mental activity, of fencing them off from human activity in general. The white radiance of life is being broken and scattered in fragments by the Absolute's dome of many-coloured glass.

In questions of art opinion is tending to crystallize around the poles of "pure art" and "propaganda." "Pure art" has its degrees of "purity," as I shall show presently, but in its "purest" form it is represented in painting by the "abstractions" of Picasso, in sculpture by the works of Brancusi, in music by the "pseudo-classic" compositions of Stravinsky, and in literature by the later works of Gertrude Stein. These, being the extremest expressions of "purity," serve best to define the concept. In such works it is useless to look for an imitation of life or nature, for an expounding of ideas or even an expression of feeling; they appeal solely to what the believers in pure art call "the aesthetic sense." This

sense (whose existence some aestheticians would deny) is a sense of pure form, of design or rhythm; and this "pure form" differs from mere ornament (like designs in wall-paper or on carpets) in being "significant" (hence "significant form"). If you ask for an interpretation of a sample of "pure art," the answer is that it is of the essence of "pure art" that its meaning can be conveyed only in its own medium; if it could be expressed in language, in logical terms, it would cease to be "pure art" and would become philosophy or religion or story-telling.

How did this theory of "pure art" arise? It is simply one aspect of the characteristic modern tendency to precipitate the salt from the liquid that holds it in solution. Before the middle of the eighteenth century there was no systematic study of the concepts "art" and "beauty." The Renaissance understood the ancients to have maintained that the arts, particularly poetry, existed for moral ends, and this was the generally accepted view down to the nineteenth century, Many treatises were produced on the art of poetry and of the drama, and some also on the technique of the plastic arts; but before the eighteenth century no attempt was made to discover what function poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, *etc.*, have in common that justifies us in speaking of them all inclusively as "art" and that separates them out from all other activities of the human spirit. As a result of the speculations of Vico, Kant, Schiller, and the Schlegels, the early nineteenth century had come to recognize in man an aesthetic faculty, quite distinct from the cognitive faculty on the one hand and the moral faculty on the other. Thus "art" became an autonomous activity, and this idea was pushed to its logical conclusion by the "Art for Art's sake school." Radical as this school seemed to the Victorians with its divorce of art

from morality, it was nevertheless relatively conservative in its adherence to the traditional view that art is imitation. The last stage in the development of "pure art" came with the post-impressionists in painting and the symbolists in poetry, who asserted their right to distort the appearances of the natural world and the processes of logical thought, in order, as they said, the better to express their personal vision. This leads to the "expressionistic" theory of art of Croce, first enunciated at the beginning of this century, according to which art is freed, not only from the shackles of moral purpose, but from all limitations of conventional form. Art, having sloughed off first the garment of moral edification and then that of representation, stands naked as the spirit of "significant form" in Clive Bell's well-known little book, *Art*.[1]

Such is the case for "pure art" in its quintessential form. But such extreme aspects of it are rare; there are all kinds of degrees between the extremes of "pure" and "impure" in art. Let us examine some concrete cases to get a clearer insight into the problem. Let us take first of all music, which, of all the arts, comes nearest to "purity." Even here, in forms like the song, opera, masses, oratorios, music is not "pure," for the words are the subject-matter to which the music is a setting. Moreover, "descriptive" or "programme" music is not "pure." Only "absolute" music like, let us say, the "Appassionata Sonata" of Beethoven is "pure music;" that is, in such music there is no subject-matter which can be formulated or even conceived apart from the music itself; yet we feel

[1]The ghostly region of "pure art" has been further explored recently by Paul Valéry and Henri Bremond. Valéry, developing the cue contained in the conception of art as a fabric of abstract relationships, arrives at the conclusion that the creative artistic act is something closely akin to the activity of the mathematician; the artist is a builder of arbitrary fabrics; this is a reversion to Schiller's "play" theory of art. Bremond, on the other hand, finds in the aesthetic apprehension of "significant form" something strangely suggestive of the vision vouchsafed to the mystic, and to him "pure art" and mysticism come close to being one.

deep significance in the music. Some would deny the name of "pure music" even to the "Appassionata" on the ground that it arouses other than purely aesthetic emotions; to such critics only the severest fugues of Bach (in which our sole pleasure is the perception of relationships between tones, time-intervals, variations of pitch, *etc.*) deserve the name of "pure music."

Now let us pass to painting, an art midway between music and literature as regards "purity." Painting deals in a medium, colour, which seems theoretically to be just as "pure," as free from any arbitrary intellectual "meaning" as tone in music, and it is perhaps strange that only in our own day have painters attempted to make symphonies of pure colour-masses. The reason probably is that nature herself presents man with quite effective ready-made colour-symphonies, whereas only occasionally (as in the boom of the seas, the storm-wind, *etc.*) does the chaos of tone in nature fall into even tolerable organization. However, the element of design, of colour-pattern, has always been very important in painting. In Byzantine and all Oriental art, in Giotto, and even in most of the great Italians of the Renaissance, it was held more important than literal representation. As early as Walter Pater we find aestheticians putting forward boldly the view that "the true pictorial quality" is "that inventive or creative handling of pure line and colour which . . . is quite independent of anything definitely poetical in the subject it accompanies." "In its primary aspect," says Pater, in a passage which has had much influence on modern aesthetics, "a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a few moments on the wall or the floor; is itself, in truth, a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and

dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself."[2] From viewing a painting as essentially a design of colour-masses, it is only a step to asking why these colour-masses should imitate the forms of the external world at all—then we have the "abstractions" of Picasso.

When we come to literature the "pure art" idea becomes still more difficult. The medium here—words—is not "pure" at all. Words are nothing—or almost nothing—in themselves; for most people they have value only as symbols standing for objects or ideas which can be grasped by the intelligence. For poets and their readers, however, words have undoubtedly another kind of symbolism; they have (as the "blessed word Mesopotamia" had for the well-known old lady) an emotive function because of the subtle associations they evoke. It is by playing the emotive value of words for all it is worth that poets are usually supposed to attain their most poetic effects. But there is no doubt that words have a third and still more recondite function which allies them to colour and tone; they can, by alliteration, cunning distribution of vowels and consonants, *etc.*, be so manipulated as to produce semi-musical effects which have little or nothing to do with their symbolic values. Now, just as the painter distributes his colour-masses at the same time that he makes these colour-masses represent external objects, so this musical value of language may be combined with intellectual and emotional subject-matter, or it may be allowed to exist by itself, as Picasso makes line and colour exist by themselves; in either case we get something which may be called "pure poetry." The songs of Shakespeare may be taken as familiar and very fine examples of the first or modified form of "pure

[2] "The School of Giorgione," 1877.

poetry;" Pater and Housman both choose as their example that exquisite lyric beginning:

> Take, O take those lips away,
> That so sweetly were forsworn.

Housman says: "That is nonsense; but it is ravishing poetry." He calls Blake "more poetical than Shakespeare, because poetry in him preponderates more than in Shakespeare over everything else, and instead of being confounded in a great river can be drunk from a slender channel of its own. Shakespeare is rich in thought, and his meaning has power of itself to move us, even if the poetry were not there. Blake's meaning is often unimportant or virtually non-existent, so that we can listen with all our hearing to his celestial tune." He quotes the stanzas from Blake, beginning:

> Memory, hither come
> And tune your merry notes;

and then comments: "That answers to nothing real; memory's merry notes and the rest are empty phrases, not things to be imagined; the stanza does but entangle the reader in a net of thoughtless delight."[3] But, after all, this is "pure poetry" of the modified kind; whatever Housman may say about its answering to nothing real, the mind can get hold of fragmentary images and ideas and the syntax is normal. For an example of "pure poetry" *tout pur* the reader may be referred to the closing paragraph of that fragment of James Joyce's *Work in Progress*, called *Anna Livia Plurabelle*.

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No view of art could stand in sharper contrast to the one just enunciated than the theory that all art is propa-

[3] A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, 1933.

ganda. I refer to the view held by many socialists—and sometimes said to be the official view of art in Soviet Russia—that art, like other spiritual activities of man, is of necessity, and whether the artist is conscious of the fact or not, a function of the economic order. In a capitalist order you have capitalist art; in a proletarian order, proletarian art. There is no such thing as an autonomous aesthetic faculty. So-called "pure art," for instance, with its alleged detachment from practical life, from politics and economics, is either the product of dilettante leisure or the expression of disgust with the real world in which one lives and of a yearning for a more perfect "land of heart's desire;" and either origin has its roots in the nature of the capitalist system and would be inconceivable in the Socialist Utopia where everyone would be a worker and where the real world would be at the same time an ideal world from which no one would wish to escape to the "ivory tower."

This theory is but the Marxian variant of Madame de Staël's famous aphorism, "Literature is the expression of society." Madame de Staël was engaged in interpreting German literature to a France completely ignorant of its neighbour's culture, and it was in trying to show how the different social and political organization of Germany necessarily produced a literature very different from that of France that she hit upon her famous phrase. Is this view valid or not? It depends upon the interpretation placed upon it. Madame de Staël's phrase is notoriously vague and ambiguous. By "literature" are we to understand all the literature (or art) produced by the age or only the literature accepted by the ruling class and its official critics? By "society" are we to understand the total population or again only the ruling class? By "expression" are we to understand a realistic presentation of

the facts about the society, or a statement of its aspirations or perhaps its delusions about itself? Or does "expression" not imply a direct but only an indirect relation of art to society, a sublimation of society into effects of style and atmosphere, as in the case of the French *salon* life influencing French prose in the direction of clarity and wit?

If we glance over the history of art since the Middle Ages, it is clear that certain changes in taste are attributable to changes in the social structure. As long as the church, the court, and the aristocracy gave the tone to life and were the sole patrons of art, middle and lower class life had scant representation in art (except as a comic element). The LeNains's attempt to portray the French peasantry on canvas in the seventeenth century met with no favour (yet, please note, they made the attempt), and Louis XIV rejected in disgust the tavern-scenes of Teniers and Brouwer. In spite of the bourgeois character of Molière's temperament, the typical French bourgeois nearly always appears in his plays with a more or less marked aura of the absurd hovering about him. Even Shakespeare's universal mind was unable to conceive the idea of a middle-class tragedy. It is in the democratic Dutch states that painting first systematically devotes itself to the portrayal of middle-class life. Not until the eighteenth century is the man or woman of the middle class treated with serious respect in the English or French novel or drama. Marivaux and Richardson for the first time give a status in fiction to the love-life of the ordinary middle-class girl—a status previously reserved for the Cleopatras and the Juliet Capulets. What a contrast between Molière's foolish Monsieur Jourdain and Beaumarchais's triumphant Figaro, as types of the bourgeois "go-getter" just a century apart. The

growing importance of the *question d'argent* from LeSage to Balzac is also significant. In painting, the struggle between the dying ideal of aristocratic sensuous elegance and the dawning bourgeois sentimental realism is vividly represented in eighteenth-century France by Watteau, Fragonard, and Boucher, on the one hand, and Chardin and Greuze, on the other. Even in music Beethoven's brusqueness has been taken to symbolize the intrusion of the bourgeois into an art whose ideal had been the Mozartian suavity.

But while the setting and the style of art change in response to social changes, much abides beneath the surface. For instance, all the art that has to do with individual psychology—can it be much affected fundamentally by social changes? Racine's tragedies deal with the love-affairs of "the Colonel's lady," Richardson's *Pamela* with those of "Judy O'Grady," but only to prove that they are "sisters under their skins." All that is pure imagination, pure lyric—like *The Ancient Mariner* or *The Daffodils*; all that has to do with man's sense of his relation to the universe—like Pascal's *Pensées*: how can it have a different aspect under aristocracy, bourgeoisie, or proletariat? Moreover, some of the changes mentioned above are susceptible of an aesthetic as well as of a sociological explanation. Racine's heroes are kings and princesses partly, at least, because Aristotle said the protagonists of tragedy should be people of high estate. It was not only the rise of a new class but the decline in prestige of ancient critics that paved the way for a more bourgeois literature. Professor Lascelles Abercrombie has put the matter in a nutshell: "Life," he says, "creates its traditions, and literature creates *its* traditions; they are profoundly and subtly related; but they are not the *same* traditions."

This question of the relation of art to propaganda and

society has become a burning issue in our time, when over a large section of the globe the old social and economic order has been overthrown. It has been raised with special urgency in America since Michael Gold launched his violent attack in 1930 on Thornton Wilder, whose writings, according to Gold, were the poetry "of a small sophisticated class that has recently arisen—our genteel bourgeoisie," and on a plane with "luxury hotels, golf, old furniture, and Vanity Fair sophistication." "How," he asked, "could this discreet French drawing-room hold all the blood, horror and hope of the world's new empire? Where are the modern streets of New York, Chicago and New Orleans? Where are the cotton mills and the murder of Ella May and her songs? Where are the child-slaves of the beet-fields? Where are the stock-broker suicides, the labour racketeers or the passion and death of the coal-miners?" Later, Malcolm Cowley asks the question, "Should artists take part in the class struggle?" and answers it thus: "There is no use adjuring them to take part in it or warning them to keep out of it; the adjurations and warnings are so much wasted breath. The artists will and do take part in it, because they are men before they are writers or painters, and because their human interests are involved, and because they can't stay out of the battle without deliberately blinding and benumbing themselves—and even then they are likely to find that they have been led into it without their knowledge and on a side they mightn't consciously have chosen."

If indeed what is impending is not a mere raid of the Have-nots upon the Haves, but a *levée en masse* of all that is good and just in the world to wage a war of extermination on greed and injustice, then we may be in for one of those very exceptional periods in history, when it is

true to say of art, not that it becomes propaganda, but that it retires temporarily from the scene while a new soil is being prepared for it. We assumed above that all in art that concerns human psychology, or man's relation to the universe, must remain unchanged, whatever social revolution takes place. But suppose that the revolution involves a new psychology, new *mores*, a new man. That is what the Communists maintain their revolution does involve, and indeed, in order to be a success, it would seem, it must involve nothing less. In that case, the basis of art, particularly of literature, would indeed be changed. What would much of our Western fiction and drama mean to people to whom competition and struggle for individual prestige and men's possessive jealousy regarding their women were strange and uncanny practices of a bygone barbaric world? What could a novel of Thackeray, of Henry James, or of Edith Wharton mean to a society where there were no dukes, no inequality of wealth, no snobbery?

Now, if such a change as that comes about (the "if" is a large one), Art will be faced with a situation which will make our analogies with the Renaissance or the French Revolution seem ridiculously inadequate. The Communist Revolution will then be comparable to only one other event in the history of Western man—the displacement of Paganism by Christianity; and *that* revolution *was* accompanied by fierce propaganda against the art of a preceding civilization—a propaganda that indeed practically succeeded in destroying all knowledge of Greek and Roman art for nearly a thousand years. And Christian propaganda was directed against classical art precisely because that art was regarded as being, consciously or unconsciously, propaganda for pagan morals and religion.

* * * * *

Such, then, are the two poles between which aesthetic thought oscillates at the present time. Their reciprocal hostility came out very clearly at a session of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris a few months ago, when Jules Romains protested that all the speakers, in discussing what the duties of intellectual men were in the present crisis of Europe, had banished the political aspect of every problem from the discussion. The implication in this statement enraged Paul Valéry, who cried defiantly: "I persist in believing that if a man were shut up in his cell, engaged in working out an abstract idea, something would always come of it." Where does the truth lie? Shall we throw our caps for "purity" or for "propaganda"? For neither, and, in some measure, for both. We come back to what I said at the beginning. We are too analytical nowadays, too inclined to seek "quintessences" and to separate out from one another activities which are most beneficent when they form a synthesis.

From an analytical point of view, it seems to me that the "pure art" enthusiasts are perfectly correct. I believe that there is such a thing as the "aesthetic emotion" and that "pure art" plays on it and on no other part of our organism. There is some part of our nervous structure that responds to pure rhythms, to spatial and temporal relationships, whatever we like to call them, and to nothing else. Since the other elements in music, in pictures and poems, share with other emotional stimuli the right to play upon our nerves, it seems reasonable to reserve for the first specialized stimuli the name of "art." In a Raphael Madonna—the argument runs—I am affected by the beauty of the face (but a real woman's face will affect me as much), I am affected by the sweet expression of mother-love (but that, too, will affect me in real

life), I am affected by the suavity of the design of the whole picture, the curve of the arm of the Virgin which balances the curve of the body of the child, the blue of the scarf which balances the blue of her sleeve (*and these designs made of lines and colours I cannot get in real life*); therefore these designs are the "art" of the picture. I do not have to go to Shakespeare to learn that men sometimes contemplate suicide; Hamlet's famous soliloquy tells me nothing I did not know before; its beauty lies in its pure music, the organ-like swell of the whole paragraph, the sweet concord of sounds in individual lines like

> That undiscovered country from whose bourne
> No traveller returns.

Milton pretends that he writes *Paradise Lost* "to justify the ways of God to men," but theology does that better than poetry, and if anyone opens his epic now, it is for the sake of musical passages like

> from morn
> To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
> A summer's day, and with the setting sun
> Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
> On Lemnos th' Aegean isle . . . .

But does it follow that because the "pure art" of cookery aims at tickling the palate, the cook should give us nothing to put in our stomach? The true wine-taster enjoys the *bouquet* and the *robe* of the wine, but he drinks down its body too. In fact, without food can you have an art of cooking, and without the juice of the grape can you have a *bouquet*? After all, are the devotees of "pure art" in painting so sure that what constitutes the deep attraction of paintings having fine design is the design itself? Is it not rather that a clear and fine design focusses our attention upon the "meaning" of the scene portrayed, and that the "meaning" cannot properly be said to be in

the design itself? I am, of course, not arguing for mere photographic representation; yet the existence of "artistic photography" shows that subject-matter can itself constitute art. Is not "pure art" simply the overtone of "art"?

The fact is, that once we have isolated "art" as the element of rhythm or design or musicality in poems, pictures, and music, we realize that we need some other word to cover the varied effects that poems, pictures, and music (unanalysed) actually produce on us. For "Art" in the old-fashioned, general sense is a much bigger thing than "Art" in this modern special sense. It appeals not merely to our "aesthetic sense;" it is a grand concerted attack all along the line on our whole nervous organization, on our memories, our emotions, our experience of life, even our intellectual knowledge. There is no corner of our conscious being into which a really great work of art like *Hamlet*, or the *Divine Comedy*, or Rembrandt's "Christ at Emmaus" or Beethoven's "Choral Symphony" does not penetrate. Undoubtedly exquisite things that no lover of poetry or of painting would wish to let die have proceeded from the impulse to create "pure art" (the songs of Herrick, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, Keats's *La belle dame sans merci*, some of Watteau's and Matisse's paintings), but although these may be the "purest" art, are they the "greatest" art? It will be noticed that some of the most exquisite gems of "pure poetry" we have quoted above come from the pens of Shakespeare and Milton; they had evidently nothing to learn about "pure art;" yet what would Shakespeare—above all, what would Milton have said—if anyone had told them that in such passages they had done their most important work? The English philosopher, Samuel Alexander, seems to have said the last word on the subject: "Greatness in art

depends not on the form which determines its beauty, but upon the subject, or what is often called by the un-English name of content. There are no degrees of beauty, except in the sense that works of art, poems or prose works fall short of perfection of form in various degrees. But there are degrees of greatness, arising from the nature or handling of the subject."[4]

Many people have the uneasy feeling that, beautiful as our modern art may be (and I think it is often very beautiful), it is, as compared with the art of certain periods in the past, lacking in the element of "greatness." Though it appeals strongly to our aesthetic sense, that is often the only part of our being to which it appeals. It is here that we may perhaps find a germ of suggestion—nothing more —in the other pole of aesthetic thought: art as propaganda. If propaganda means selling to the public a particular brand of practical economics, then it may be rejected as having nothing to do with art. Whatever enters into art must first have become one with the artist's soul, not merely with his superficial intellect. But if, beneath the confusion and ballyhoo of our times, a poet or a painter or any artist thought he perceived the dawning of a new order of human relationships which offered an escape from the quagmire of greed and intrigue and hatred through which the men of to-day drag their heavy footsteps, and if the artist (like, for example, the Mexican painter, Diego Rivera) could throw himself into that cause heart and soul, might he not restore to the art of to-day something it lacks, a driving force of faith and enthusiasm? Many will feel like retorting: No, the essence of the true artist is impersonality, detachment. To these I must say: You are in good, and even occasionally in the greatest company, for Shakespeare is of your

[4]S. Alexander, *Beauty and Other Forms of Value*, 1933.

number. Only, on those terms "greatness" is even harder to come by, for it involves the possession of a universal grasp and sympathy which seems to be vouchsafed to but a handful of human beings in the course of centuries. "Greatness" in the case of most artists attaches to ardour of conviction and nobility of purpose. We have only to think of Dante and Milton (with their passion to justify the ways of God to men), of Shelley and Beethoven (with their passion for human brotherhood and liberty), of Daumier and Wagner (with something already of the socialist enthusiasm) to realize that "propaganda" may have a sublimated form well worthy of the artist's dignity. And it is quite beside the mark to say that all these great artists were pursuing illusions. That makes not an iota of difference. For we are not talking here about practical results; we are thinking of these great enthusiasms, not as ends in themselves (the sociologist, the theologian, the statesman may be interested in them from that point of view); we are interested in them as means for producing that commotion in the soul whence "greatness" in art issues. When the commotion has produced the great art, it may, as far as our interests are concerned, subside. The greatness has passed into the work that remains. The atheist may feel the greatness which Dante's faith communicates to his *Divine Comedy*, and the political dictator may thrill to the music of Beethoven which throbs with defiance to dictators.

THE SELF IN MODERN THOUGHT

RUPERT LODGE

LINGUISTIC usage indicates that we all naturally regard the world as made up of "things." Whenever, in the web of relations which surrounds us, we come upon permanent centres of behaviour, we attribute thinghood to them. "The stone itself," "the flower itself," *etc.*, are thought of as individuals possessing distinct characteristics of their own; and although we may speak of them impersonally, there is a strong tendency to think of them, not merely as "things," but as "individuals," and even as "selves." We are incurable animists. Anything which moves or might move, we tend to regard as somehow alive; and anything which is alive, or might be alive, we tend to regard as animated by some sort of "self." In cases where these living "selves" are closely associated with the life of human beings, we go further and tend to attribute to them personality in the full sense, accepting them almost as our social equals. "Poor dear Fido" is, to many of us, a personage to be propitiated; "Pretty Poll" is, in many neighbourhoods, a well-known character; "Puss in Boots" is not the only cat who has assisted his master into the ranks of the nobility; and a horse was, on one occasion, elevated to the position of consul of the Roman Empire.

Non-living things also, if we have much to do with them, may come to exhibit character and personality of a sort. A much lived-in room, the little gray home in the West, the friendly rays of the night-light, watching so faithfully over the sleeping children, the mysterious night, calling to us as a lover calls to his beloved, the moon and stars, the good earth—how many of these are enshrined in our hearts by the genius of poetry! To the Greeks, every breeze and fountain, every storm as well

as every tree, had its nymph or tutelary spirit; and which of us moderns has not at times felt utterly at home with nature in her varying moods, as with a wonderful, all-understanding friend? And the things we make and use from day to day: our books and papers, our dishes and furniture, our clothes and cars, our pipes and walking-sticks. There seems to be no limit to our attribution of character and selfhood. Wherever there is individuality, there may be a friend and companion, or a stranger and a foe.

But we all recognize here a certain distinction. The personality attributed to inanimate things does not belong to them in their own right, but only in relation to ourselves. It is not *their* personality, but a projection of *ours*. We lend it to them for purposes of social intercourse. When the *Grand Monarque* deigned to associate with lesser mortals, the rank and dignity granted to them was a courtesy extension of his own inherent nobility. He was the sole fountain of their honour. When a child takes her "Dolly" or "Teddy" to be the spectator and companion of her play, it is her own personality with which she endows it. And further: in the social relationship thus created, we are not losers, but gainers. To lend personality to others does not diminish, but indeed multiplies our own self, as if we lived in a room with many mirrors. The *Grand Monarque* felt grander when he had his court around him. Many a man acquires ease and a sense of importance from his pipe and walking-stick. They are parts of him, and make him a bigger and better man. If he is deprived of them, his personality dwindles and suffers. The hostess without her reception-room, the book-enthusiast without his library, feel as lost as the sailor without his ship, or the actor without a part in a forthcoming play.

The self is essentially social. It takes two to quarrel, and two to make love. In order to realize our own personality, we seek the fulfilment of our self in some other and project upon that other, by an effect of the imagination, whatever qualities are required to make it our perfect counterpart. The self is incorrigibly dramatic. We need others to play our game with us; and, in dramatizing them as well as our own selves, we treat them as means to our ends, as foils to enhance our own *dramatis persona*. With inanimate objects, success is easy. With a big house, grand furniture, and sumptuous entertainments, who does not feel himself a fine fellow, a man of taste, a person with a stake in the country? And further: when petting our dogs and horses, or encouraging humbler persons to look up to us, which of us does not feel confirmed in his conviction of innate superiority? But in intercourse with our equals, when we try to impose our own valuation upon others, we may come upon difficulties. They may be equally ambitious to impose upon *us*. When one queen bee meets another queen bee, a battle royal ensues.

These well-known facts of experience suggest two problems. In our world of claims and counter-claims, is the other fellow quite real? How much of his apparent personality is due to our own imagination? And in the second place, when we reflect, are we entirely sure of our *own* selves, either? Perhaps we are not quite the selves we think we are. It may be that our apparent personality also is largely fictitious, a product of someone's imagination, a bubble that can be pricked. In abstract thought we distinguish the self we really are from the self we would like to think we are, the self others think we are, and the self we believe others think we are. In fact, we find ourselves making still further distinctions, all with

concrete meaning for us, until what we would really like to believe we possess in the way of a self, seems to have become lost. We believe that each of us is an "I" which has a "me;" but as soon as we begin to ask questions, the status of this "I" and "me" suddenly becomes problematic; the origin of a "self," its functions and its limitations, suddenly become matters of opinion, and of opinions which differ very sharply. Let us proceed to examine the chief opinions which are held, commencing with the position of the realist.

To realists, thinghood, individuality, and selfhood seem alike at least in this, that they are fundamentally physical. They consist of elements which are physical; they interact with conditions which are physical; and eventually they dissolve without remainder into elements which are physical. Their whole meaning is to be a part of physical reality. In fact, their origin, functioning, and destiny are precisely comparable to the origin, functioning, and destiny of a wave rippling the surface of a lake, or of a raindrop sinking into the shining sea.

Individuality and selfhood, however, differ from thinghood, and only make their appearance when the conditions are more complex than the conditions of thinghood. Protons and ions, atoms and molecules of the same kind, and many other physical complexes, are regarded by realists as "things," but not as "individuals." They are interchangeable. Any hundred protons could be substituted for any other hundred, without the slightest difference from the standpoint of physical science. They have no more individuality than the ones, twos, and threes of arithmetic, or the x's and y's of algebraic equations. When the chemist states that "Water $= H_2O$," there is, for him, nothing individual about the "water," any more than about the "H," the "2," and the "O."

They are all equally equational elements, and, as such, possess identity, but not individuality.

It is only when the situation grows more complicated, so that differences cannot be disregarded but enter into our equations, at least in the form of a definite "probable error," that individuality achieves recognition as a factor to be reckoned with. In the biological sciences, some recognition is usually accorded to this factor. That is to say, when the situation is complex enough for the emergence of life, individuality can no longer be ignored.[1] Once we rise above the level of the amoeba or paramoecium, we have to make allowances for the differences between organisms of the same species. At flower-shows or state fairs, the judges—even realist judges—adopt the platonic idea, *i.e.*, the perfect type-form, of the Chrysanthemum or Pomeranian, as a standard by which to measure the rival candidates. But the differences are always great enough for this specimen, rather than that, to be awarded the prize. One "Mum" keeps its marcel a little better than the other "Mums," and one "Pom" is always just a bit fluffier than the other "Poms."

When it comes to the difference between individuality and selfhood, realists make a determined stand. It is all very well for *common* sense, with its easy-going animism, to slip across the line without noticing it. It is natural, when we project our own self into an object, to treat it as a sort of social equal, as when we catch sight of ourselves in a mirror. But there is none of this nonsense in realism. Object is object, and subject is subject; and what imagination has joined, logic can keep asunder.

[1]Individuality is recognized in inanimate things also, when there is a social or legal reason for so doing. Machine-made objects are often practically indistinguishable; but where there is a legal or economic reason for distinguishing between *meum* and *tuum*, typewriters and automobiles are given serial numbers, and sometimes private marks as well.

A "self," for realism, emerges only in situations in which both life and mind are objectively present. A body from which life has fled has no self. If we are animistic enough to attribute selfhood to it, we are in error. A living man whose mentality is in abeyance, whether because he is asleep or because he is deranged, has, for the time being, no self. A self emerges only in situations in which mind emerges. These situations are, for realism, physical, but highly complex. There has to be an organism with a well-developed brain and nervous system, interacting with a physico-chemical environment. "Mind," for realism, consists precisely in this interactivity. When brain and environment are *en rapport*, mind is present. It is "out there," where all its conditions are. When the interactivity lapses, mind also lapses, and ceases to be "there."

The difference between "mind," thus understood, and "self," is, for realism, as follows: A mind does not have to be reflective, conscious of itself, or even to be conscious at all. The interaction of brain and environment can take place without any awareness, either of the environmental, or of the organic, conditions. A "self," however, is always reflective. For a self to emerge, there must be consciousness of the relation linking the interactivity "out there," which is "mind," to the organic conditions, which are a particular body. "Self" is thus, for realism, a mind-body complex, "mind" associated with a particular body, or a highly developed organism associated reflectively with "mind." The conditions are all physical, but the organic conditions are especially stressed, and the situation seems to involve reflective awareness.

Let us examine more carefully just what this means. The realist, treating selfhood always as strictly objective, studies, let us say, the self of someone else, *e.g.*, of Napo-

leon. He investigates the objective content of Napoleon's "mind," *i.e.*, the objective events of which Napoleon's organism and brain seem to have been the storm centre. He asks what physical factors have interacted with, and have entered into, the organic and nervous system of Napoleon. The social conditions of his birth and early upbringing in the Corsican environment, the elements of his schooling, of his training in mathematics—he was good at mathematics—and in military science, the influence of his companions, of the social conditions of his time, of the various opportunities which came his way, up to the celebrated "whiff of grapeshot"—all these are carefully enumerated, and their converging influence determined.

For the realist, the central core of a personality like Napoleon's is purely a matter of the converging influences of such-and-such factors, all objective, upon a central nervous system and organism of such-and-such a kind. The result of this convergence, of the interactivity of these external and organic factors, when associated reflectively, is the personality of the historic Napoleon.

All the factors, however complex, are physical, and the resulting personality is physical too. Biography and history are thus, for realism, physical sciences, investigating the physical causes and the physical effects of a large number of such factors. The method of investigation is objective throughout; and nothing whatever is, in principle, left out of the account. The whole story of the personality which we attribute to Napoleon, from its origin to its final dissolution, including both his achievements and his limitations, is, and should be, an objective story, and constitutes a part of physical science.

Realists use the same method when they speak of themselves too. They never deviate into subjectivity.

Their autobiographies always read as though they had been written by somebody else. Herbert Spencer's autobiography is an objective report of quasi-microscopic observations. David Hume, describing his own life and approaching death, could not have written more dispassionately and impersonally if he had been the physician instead of the patient. Havelock Ellis's introspections represent a triumph in the suppression of self. In fact, whether they refer to others, or to their own selves, realists always[2] regard the self as a mind-body complex, with the emphasis laid upon the nervous system and its history. Its reality consists in its being an organic part of the total tissue of events taking place between such-and-such dates, *et praeterea nihil.* There is never any really "inside" information, and it is something of a puzzle why language should ever have developed such terms as "I" and "me." They seem entirely superfluous in a world where logic is king, life is so much animated mathematics, and everyone counts for one, and no one for more than one. The ukase of objectivity really banishes them, as Hume saw, to the limbo of lost illusions.

Let us now consider the position of idealism. To idealists, the self is not a fact, but something better: an

[2]There are certain family differences among realists. "Critical" realists identify mind with the physical brain, and thus believe that we possess individual minds as well as individual selves. The content, however, of both mind and self, remains fundamentally objective. "Intentional" realists believe that experience has a subjective as well as an objective aspect, and try to do justice to the vital, as well as to the logical, side of experience. When we contemplate this or that, the content contemplat*ed*, which gives the tone to our contemplat*ing*, is objective; but the contemplat*ing*, in so far as *we* experience or "enjoy" (*erleben*) it, is subjective. It remains true, however, that our contemplat*ing* cannot be separated from the content contemplat*ed*, and it is entirely governed by that objective content. Our contemplating does not alter the content contemplated, and our enjoyment affects it, if possible, still less. The self thus remains, for S. Alexander as for other realists, a mind-body complex, definable entirely in terms of objective content, and constituting a part of the physical world.

ideal which guides and masters fact. Mere facts are seldom satisfying. Look at life, as we know it empirically. There is so little about us which is permanent and vital. We vary from week to week, and from hour to hour. In the period from ten to twelve a.m., our bodies are physically fit and our minds keen. We feel equal to concentrating upon and solving any problems which arise. If none comes, we manufacture problems for ourselves, and delight in solving them. We are wide-awake, capable, and most active. But a few hours earlier, from seven to eight or nine, our bodies are sleepy, our minds sluggish, and our tempers short. We may set problems to others, but, for ourselves, we avoid them. We seem incapable of either effort or interest. *Magna est vis inertiae, et praevalebit.* So too in the evenings, with most of us. After about eleven, our bodies are fatigued, our powers of concentration dissipated, and our minds—did we ever have any?—incapable of any thought higher than *mañana.* The self is then at a low ebb. At other times, we can do nothing wrong; our powers, taken at the flood, lead on to fame and fortune.

So great is the difference between our best and our worst, that we long, one and all of us, for a self always at its best, always keyed up, always a hundred per cent. efficient. And here the neophyte tends to construct a make-believe image. He pictures a self absolutely flawless, beyond all fluctuation and change. But it is so remote from empirical reality that it never occurs to him to connect it with practice. The mere picture is so comforting that it serves as a kind of moral blanket, in which he snuggles pleasantly and forgets the cold realities of life. It is like the ideal haven of the poets, where the bark of self, after its troubled voyage, is moored, eternally at rest. To genuine idealists, however, such pictures are

false, and the comfort they proffer is illusory. The idealist understands that the function of a bark, that magnificent four-masted square-rigger of the old school, is not to lie at anchor, but to sail the seven seas. The true ideal of life is to live, intensely and completely; not to withdraw into some academic or monastic Nirvana, however attractively disguised. The ideal, that is to say, is to transcend, not life, but only its everyday fluctuations; to transcend, not true growth and change, but only their empirical imitations.

What is this transcendental motion and progress which idealists regard as truly real? It is not hard to grasp. Consider the popular picture of the college student as "always going places." He does actually move, for four academic years, from one part of the campus to another. He exercises his right of physical *entreé* to class-rooms, library, refectory, playing-fields, *etc.*, along with numbers of his fellows. But, as a picture of the student's real development, the suggestion this conveys is grotesque. Physical motion, by itself, is simply irrelevant to spiritual development; for this is not external, but internal; and it is this inner motion and progress which the idealist regards as truly real. The self really lives and grows only in so far as it sets and solves problems of its own: as in unifying, organizing, and systematizing this or that content. The content of the college curriculum, as also of the extra-curricular activities, supplies the student, not with a ready-made structure to be swallowed whole by his self, but with a medium in which he may succeed in realizing his self. New experiences and contents only become "ours" when we have thought them over and talked them over, and have thus taken them up reflectively into ourself. What idealism regards as significant, is not the factual informa-

tion, or the laboratory and library technique acquired by the student. Unless constantly kept in living exercise, such contents and such methods are alien to the self. If the self separates itself from them—as it so often does when the college course is over—they quickly disappear. They sink into the limbo of lapsed interests, and remain there in a state of suspended animation.

If, however, we have occasion, in after years, to assist some youthful member of our family to translate "Caesar," or to understand the biological "subdivision of cells," it is surprising how it comes back to us. It comes back, not so much as an objective content, taken out of a long disused pigeon-hole, but rather as a latent part of our self, a territory still subject to our *imperium*. Power goes out from us to this long unoccupied province of the self, and from it to us. The re-absorption is easy, and our understanding and control tend to be greater than they ever were in the past; for the self has grown in the meantime, and what it has once possessed, it can re-possess, by assimilating the earlier to the later self.

The truth is that growth in selfhood always comes, not so much from wrestling with altogether alien and impersonal contents, as such, and forcing them into our own mental patterns, as from living intercourse with other selves. These may be former selves of our own, as in the case of lapsed interests. They may be the selves of others, with whom we unite ourselves in loving sympathy, as in the case of a teacher or friend. They may be selves which we create, the offspring of some spiritual union with a great teacher or writer, selves capable of further life of their own. Two heads are better than one; and where two or three are gathered together with a community of interest, something may arise in the midst of them, of which, had they remained apart, not one of

them would have formed a conception. When we study some subject, we tend to unite our self with the self contained within the subject. We read, not so many pages of "text," in the abstract, but so much "Shakespeare," so much "Dickens," so much "Balzac." We project our self into what we read, and unite our self with the hero or heroine, or, it may be, with the writer, wrestling creatively with his problem. The result of our reading may be merely a broadening and deepening of our interests, of our powers of self-projection into the realm of make-believe. Or it may be that our powers of self-projection will be so stimulated as to create something capable of independent life. Self-dramatization is always present in the growing self; but its value for spiritual growth is greater when it is not a mere pastime; when the selves thus created out of our own life develop further in intercourse with one another. Who can doubt that Shakespeare's life developed in richness, as he lived creatively through dramatization after dramatization, or that Plato, throwing himself not only into his "Socrates," but also into all the interlocutors he created for his "Socrates" to talk with, expanded so as to typify, in his own person, the whole breadth of Hellenic culture?

It is, then, the intermingling of selves which brings about spiritual development, development toward realizing ideal selfhood. Each self, according to idealism, is a fragment, a single aspect, of the ideal self; and it needs others to help it to grow out of its fragmentariness and isolation so as to realize its place in the ideal whole. If it treats both itself and the others as though each is complete in itself, and not rather as pointing beyond itself toward completion in some transcendental whole, development does not come. If every member of an orchestra regards himself as essentially a soloist, trying to dominate

all the rest, the result is chaotic. But if each subdues his individual pride of virtuosity to the spirit of the symphony as a whole, suddenly all find themselves working together, and entering into a newer and finer and altogether delightful kind of harmony and life.

It is when the search for the ideal and its realization guides and controls the association of self with self, that this development comes. For it is the ideal realm which is the source of the elevation and rapture which then transmutes and enriches our life. The ideal may be Love; it may be Beauty; it may be Truth, or Goodness, or Justice, or Power, or Life. Whatever the form in which it comes to us, it is the living vision of the ideal which alone has the power to free us from our isolation and fragmentariness, and is the source of the inner glow and fire of the spirit, which we then experience. It is because John and Mary are in love, not merely with one another, but with Love itself, that their life together becomes a thing of beauty and glory.

When such experience comes to us, we cease to be merely empirical, and we become transcendental. For this transcendental self we recognize as our very own. That is why, for the true autobiography of Shakespeare, we must look to the great plays of his maturity; or for the autobiography of the true Plato, to the four or five great dialogues which everyone still reads. Chit-chat about the space-time movements and economic incidents in the life of Beethoven merely hides from us the true man. It is in his quartets and symphonies and sonatas that the true, essential Beethoven is to be found. Charged with the richness of reflective insight, and the strength of enlightened and deliberate choice, such works are the adequate revelation of the inmost self; and they speak to us as they do because we too are phases of one and the

same transcendental self. Our life consists, not in being a part of physical events from the day of our birth to the day of our death, but rather in being a portion, a living and growing portion, of that self-creative, spiritual experience which transcends all space and all time, and is, not factual, but ideal.

The self, as idealists believe, has a metaphysical status. As a metaphysical principle, it expresses itself, in the medium of the space-time world, by constructing counterparts of itself, spiritual unities such as science, art, and social institutions, which live and flourish, and spread their culture abroad throughout the empirical world, until it too becomes something more than merely empirical. It accepts the unity, the orderliness, the system of laws which have their source in the ideal demands of the self, and thus becomes a mirror in which the self, with its spiritual law of unity and ordered system, recognizes everywhere its own features. The self is the source, the law, the ideal reality, of which the world is the outcome, the instance, the empirical phenomenon. The self is the ideal world, and the world is the space-time self. With this hint of the metaphysical status of the self, we can regard our account of idealism as closed, and can proceed to consider the position of pragmatism.

The pragmatist begins, here as elsewhere, negatively, by criticizing the position of the idealist. With much in the concrete programme of idealism, he has no quarrel. He too believes in the value of social intercourse, in the co-operative solution of problems, in the construction of science, literature, and the arts, in the raising of life above the local and tribal to a more nearly human level. He too accords a place to charm and appreciation as well as to efficiency. He too can enjoy as well as act. Where co-operation is practicable, he too co-operates. But on

one fundamental point, no co-operation is possible. The pragmatist is, above everything else, an empiricist; and no empiricist can tolerate the transcendentalism which characterizes every phase of idealism. Selves which are "metaphysical," ideals which are "transcendental," points of view which are declared to be "ultimate," are from the empirical standpoint, neither actually real nor practically usable. They represent abstractions, fictions, illusions. Idealists permit themselves to smile at the neophyte who comforts his imagination with pictures which could never be realized in practice. But *all* idealists, as the pragmatist sees them, are in precisely the position of this neophyte. For the very essence of an ideal which is "absolute" precludes its realization under the conditions of actual living. It always evades our grasp, and makes nonsense of our empirical efforts. The idealist is the unspeakable in pursuit of the unrealizable, and his ideal is rejected by all who have the courage to take their stand upon the actualities of human experience. Here no compromise is possible. We have come to the parting of the ways.

The pragmatist, then, is an empiricist, and the self in which he believes is not an ideal, but a kind of social fact. It is a phenomenon which emerges in concrete situations of considerable complexity. When an organism is interacting with its environment, "experience" emerges. When organisms interact with one another, "social experience" emerges. When this social interactivity is mediated by concepts or language-symbols, "mind" emerges. Like life, these three, "experience," "social experience," and "mind," are not *things* but *functions*. They are functions of *all* the factors, organic and inorganic, which constitute the concrete situation. "Self" is understood, in the same way, not as a thing, but as a

function; and it emerges in precisely the situations in which "mind" emerges. Pragmatists define self as "the minded organism," and insist that it occurs as a phenomenon only in such situations as call for co-operation or interaction *via* concepts or language-symbols such as cues and rules.

Consider a number of men and women interacting as members of a dramatic cast. They throw themselves into the rôles allotted to them, and *are*, for the time being, "Gwendolen," "Ernest," "Cecily," "Jack," and "Lady Bracknell." They listen for their cues, and interact according to the rules of the game. They are *dramatis personae*, adopted in play, for an evening or for a brief season.

Consider, further, a number of men and women interacting in a social situation. They too throw themselves into the rôles allotted to them by social convention and social expectation. They too respond when their cues are given, and interact according to the rules of the social game. We see *A* playing the "heavy father," and *B* the "modern daughter." We see *C* and *D* pretending to be "hard-boiled business men," while *E* tries to make us believe that he is a "pure scientist," interested only in truth and research. When we call on *F*, he plays the part of "perfect host," while we, of course, behave like "perfect guests." The extent of such dramatization is as wide as the field of social relations. Wherever two or three are gathered together, they are all "acting," responding to their cues, and playing up to what is expected of them. In society, the self is a rôle assumed in a certain context of purposes and interactions. It may be assumed for an evening, or for a brief season, or for many years. In an extreme case, it may hardly ever be laid

aside. "Darby" is always "Darby," and "Joan" is always "Joan."

Consider finally the status of the self in the life of the family in which we grow up. To the family we are always "Tom" or "Dick," always members of the family, with a long history of family virtues and family failings behind us, from which we are never permitted altogether to escape. Family opinion has us duly labelled, and in the home circle the name we go by becomes a symbol for the kind of behaviour expected of us. "Tom would never do so-and-so; if it's Tom, you can count on him to do this-and-that." The family self, in the home circle, is thus always a behaviour-symbol, a *persona* adopted or bestowed in the family drama, and hard to grow out of, whatever we may do in later life.

For pragmatism, then, the self, whether in play or in real life, is a *persona* which is the outcome of a social situation: transient, if the situation is transient, more permanent, if the situation is more permanent. Selves are always concrete, always empirical, phenomena which emerge and immerge according as the vast interplay of events and organisms rises or falls in complexity.

How does this differ from the position of realism? In two ways. In the first place, the realist, while also thinking of the self as a "mind-body complex," always stresses the *physical* aspect of this complex. What is "real" in the self, as he sees it, is fundamentally the central nervous system, the neural habits characteristic of the organism in its interaction with the environment. The self is "real" in so far as it is an integral part of the concrete tissue of events. From birth to death, it is a single, continuously developing structure, and is not to be regarded as a loosely organized number of dramatic *personae*, as various as the situations in which they arise.

In the second place, the realist differs from the pragmatist in his attitude toward consciousness and reflection. These are prominent in self-dramatization; but the realist regards all forms of consciousness as of doubtful status in a physical world. It may be that, among the functions of the brain and nervous system, the function of "contemplating" or "apprehending" the physical world, is to be admitted. But to physical reality itself, *i.e.*, to the causal nexus of objective events recognized by science, it makes no difference whatever, whether the eye of the realist self is or is not turned upon them in "contemplation." Consciousness, for realism, is not objective, but subjective, and must be kept rigorously out of the picture called "reality." In flat opposition to this, the pragmatist insists that every phase of consciousness is closely interwoven with the rest of physical reality, and is precisely as active, precisely as objective and causative, as any features of actual existence which can be named.

If this is questioned, the pragmatist refers to a few simple experiments, which can be performed anywhere. "Mental images" are relatively simple contents of consciousness which we can all observe for ourselves. Are they merely "contemplative," or are they demonstrably active, physically active, measurably active? If we picture to ourselves a lemon, and imagine ourselves as cutting it into two halves, and then taking out a lemon-squeezer, and squeezing the lemon upon it so that the juice falls, drop by drop, into the glass below:—we shall find, even before we go further and imagine ourselves as adding sugar and water, and tasting the resultant beverage, that the mere image has started an actually, physically appreciable flow of saliva in the mouth. If we think of a man we hate, an enemy whom we would gladly meet in physical combat, and exchange blows with him,

till one or the other is thrashed within an inch of his life: —the eye flashes, the brow frowns, the hands clench, the heart beats faster. If we think of the girl we love . . . but why continue? Evidence of this sort, in connection with our senses and instinctive emotions, is easily obtained and is, for the pragmatist, convincing. So too in connection with the self. If we repeat to ourselves Coué's formula, "Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better," and assume an optimistic *persona*, we are, as we all know, more likely to succeed in our problems than if we permit ourselves to become depressed, and assume a defeatist, pessimistic *persona*. "It's all psychology," we say; but, as the pragmatist points out, it is not purely subjective. It works, and it works physically.

Let us, by way of conclusion, compare realism, idealism, and pragmatism, in their ways of looking at one and the same self. As an example, we will take the self of an experienced teacher. For the *realist*, the teacher's self is his nervous system in interaction with the environment, and is primarily a physical or bodily self. In subjecting his nervous system to the influences of the school-room, with its unremitting pressure and its perpetual demands for certain types of response, the teacher inevitably becomes objectively "conditioned," and acquires neural habits which are fixed in their direction. As the years go by, these neural habits become more closely interwoven with the objective realities of the school environment, and it is hard to tell how much of the self is contributed by the organism, and how much by the school system. Realists sometimes stress the part played by the organism, and treat the school-room, with all it stands for, as a sort of "extension of the bodily self." At other times, they stress the influence of the

school-room, and treat teachers as parts of the school equipment, precisely as objective as the text-books and wall-charts, and precisely as interchangeable. But in both cases, since the nervous system is every bit as objective as the school buildings, the realist treatment of the self is objective and physical.

The inner or private self of the teacher, from the standpoint of realism, is a mere mirroring of the objective interactivity of organism and school environment. The teacher not only looks like a teacher, carries himself like a teacher, and talks like a teacher. He soon develops a teacher's outlook, a teacher's interests, and a teacher's thoughts. He reacts to all children as to potential pupils, and to older people as to parents, colleagues, or trustees. In the end, he feels at home with other human beings only when he can interact with them in this way, in the character which has become second nature to him. His "reality" consists, even for himself, in being a teacher only, with a teacher's personality in every respect. As realists put it, his higher or inner self is "in all its stages, a continuation and expansion, and refinement of the bodily self."

So much for the realist point of view. It has at least the merit of clearness and distinctness, and is widely accepted, in practice as well as in theory. Let us now consider the idealist interpretation. The *idealist* completely reverses the realist picture, stressing the reality and independent vitality of the teacher's inner life, and treating the physical surroundings of that life as of secondary importance. He knows, of course, that there *are* teachers whose thoughts and imaginings are mere mirrorings of their space-time surroundings, poor devils who are little more than animated wall-charts or text-books, and whose unfortunate duty it is, as they see it,

to turn their pupils into examination-passing machines. But the majority of teachers have a touch of genuine idealism. For them the spiritual self is the reality, and the ideal realm is the source of their power. It is their living vision of the ideal which alone animates and endows with meaning the wall-charts and blackboards and the rest of the physical paraphernalia of school-life. For it is the life and growth of the spirit that these things serve. They are nothing *per se*, but derive their whole value from being instruments which can be used to assist in the work of education. They furnish a medium through which the spirit of the teacher converses with the spirit of the pupils, and kindles them until they too give forth spiritual warmth and light of their own. To those who are without vision, school-life may seem dull and drab, a treadmill activity which leads nowhere. But to those who have flashes of insight, the teacher is an honoured friend and leader, privileged to inspire the stumbling but eager steps of youth until youth, too, can walk surely in the paths of the spirit. The mentality and personality of the teacher, when not crushed by overwork or a too narrow routine, are an open channel leading to, as well as from, the vast ocean of knowledge, which is one of the great sources of vitality and power.

For *pragmatism*, the teacher's self emerges in the "social-vocal" situation of school-life, which requires expectant pupils and school equipment, with the community somewhere in the background, as well as the previous training of the teacher. When any one of these factors is absent, the teacher's self lapses, and does not re-appear until the situation is re-constituted. It is, in essence, transient, a function of *all* the factors mentioned.

How then does the experienced teacher come to acquire, not a transient, but a permanent *persona?* The

pragmatist explains this in three ways. In the first place, by the effect of intensity and frequency. Teaching is an intense experience, a strain upon the nervous system. It leaves its mark, and the effect is deepened by repetition. Habits are formed which give the whole organism a definite set. In the second place, the situation does not really vanish out of school-hours. The community expects teachers to be permanently on duty. Certain standards of behaviour are looked for at all times and in all circumstances. This expectation on the part of the community broadens and deepens the response of the teacher-*persona*, and never permits it to lapse. In the third place, there is the reflective consciousness of the teacher himself, urging him always to cultivate these qualities of character, as well as of physical appearance, which will make him a more efficient teacher, and give him standing in his own eyes, as well as in the eyes of the community. In these ways, a *persona* which, in its essence, is transient, becomes permanent.

This explanation differs from the idealist interpretation in being empirical; and from the realist interpretation, not merely by insisting upon the essentially transient nature of the *persona*, but especially by its recognition of the power of consciousness. It allows to the expectation on the part of pupils and community, and to the image, in the teacher's mind, of "a well-dressed, well-behaved, impressive teacher," direct causal efficacy in producing the total result. To the realist the teacher's self is a physical fact; to the idealist, a transcendental ideal; but to the pragmatist it is a "function," a gradual growth to which many factors, conscious as well as physical, contribute their quota.

REVIEWS

MAKERS OF SCIENCE*

G. S. Brett

The works of Professor Wolf and Professor Brown are concerned with the same period of time but not with the same material. Taken together they illustrate in a significant way the diversity and the unity of possible interests. Professor Wolf has been mainly interested in philosophy and especially in that part of it called logic. As a teacher in the University of London and author of various works concerning logic, together with others on Spinoza and Nietzsche, he has been led naturally to a study of the history of the sciences in what has been called the century of genius. It is in many respects an ideal epoch to choose. In the perspective of time it is not difficult to distinguish the right degrees of importance and select the most vital issues: the sciences were never more fresh and vigorous; lack of knowledge left indefinite scope for rapid progress and a multitude of inventions which brought fame to their discoverers and were, in general, real contributions to the progress of civilization. If the limitations and errors of Francis Bacon must always make his status among men of science painfully ambiguous, there is no reason to dispute his right to be a most typical figure of the days when men were learning that "nature is conquered by obedience" and that knowledge is one of the forms of power.

Professor Brown has approached his subject along a different path. As a student of French literature he has made a comprehensive and penetrating study of the documents relative to the social and scientific life of the French in the years from 1620 to 1680. The words social and scientific may be rightly joined together in this connection, for the main topic is not the actual contributions to science made by some of those who appear in the pages of this book, but rather the forms of co-operation and communication which sustained and fostered the growth of science. In effect the

**A History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, by A. Wolf, George Allen and Unwin, 1935.

Scientific Organizations in Seventeenth Century France (1620-1680), by Harcourt Brown, Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, 1934.

book is a documentary history of the more obscure activities which finally reached their goal in the foundation of the Académie Française and the Académie des Sciences. The emergence of these institutions marks a crisis in the social history of the sciences; with their foundation, as the author says, "the secular foundation for intellectual pursuits comes from a corner where existence was uncertain and hazardous into the front rank of national policy." The prelude to these more stable societies is to be found in several minor associations fostered by royal and, later, private patronage, different from the characteristic *salons* of this and the next century. There was, indeed, some difficulty in keeping the discussions on the higher intellectual plane and still greater difficulty in making the garrulous adherents recognize the prime necessity of experimental evidence. But in spite of these human frailties there was progress. The embryo societies, such as the Montmor Academy and La Compagnie des Sciences et des Arts, were destined to succumb to inevitable decay, but not until they had created a sense of the value of communication and co-operation. Apart from their function as places for the exchange of ideas and the stimulation of interest, these less-known associations deserve to be remembered with gratitude for the part they played in creating the present republic of the sciences.

For the reader who is not primarily interested in the details of this evolution, there is also the wider question of the relations between France and England. A similar process went on in England, namely, the spontaneous growth of small groups intent on experimental science and anxious to keep in touch with all the novelties or useful devices which appeared in different countries. The men of Gresham College were the forerunners of the Royal Society as the minor societies were of the Académie des Sciences. The *Journal des Savants*, founded in 1665, was quickly followed by the *Philosophical Transactions;* the Royal Society obtained its charter in 1662 and the regular meetings of the Académie began in 1666. Too much emphasis cannot be laid on this movement for co-operation, and honour is due not only to the great discoverers but also to the men who devoted time and labour to correspondence. In these days of innumerable publications, it is easy to underestimate or wholly forget the services of those who faithfully kept the records of meetings and diligently communicated to different groups in different countries all that seemed important. The

Journal and the *Transactions* were the logical outcome of this method of correspondence; as soon as they were established the work of the letter-writer gave place to the periodical, and science derived the benefit of publicity on a more adequate scale and in a more convenient manner. There is no opportunity here to enter into the details which Professor Brown has explored or refer to the famous names which recur in his chapters. For the limited field on which he has concentrated, this work is authoritative.

Professor Wolf indicates by his title that he proposes to show the relation of "pure" science and of philosophy to the progress of useful knowledge. It is now generally recognized that the object of the men who formed the Royal Society at its beginning was mainly the improvement of the instruments of science. As Locke and others expressly stated, men were tired of hypotheses; but the desire to experiment was balked by the lack of proper means; until the telescope, the microscope, and the balance were more perfect, exact observation was not possible. Consequently, emphasis was put on the progress of crafts, notably the grinding and combining of lenses, improvement of thermometers, various forms of the barometer, the air pump, an instrument for taking soundings and for measuring the strength of the wind. The distinction between pure and applied science, always difficult to make, was not a matter of any importance at a time when research involved making even the essential instruments; and the making of instruments was a valuable contribution to the whole progress of science: it marked that change of attitude which Bacon so aptly described when he said that knowledge should not go as hitherto from master to pupil (the uncorrupted tradition) but from inventor to improver.

There are at least two ways of attacking the formidable task of writing the history of science. One way is that of the specialist who confines himself to one subject and traces its progress in time. The other way is to take a section of time, consider all the branches of science in that period, and exhibit their relations. Dr. Wolf has chosen the second method and taken for his special period the years from 1543 A.D. to the end of the seventeenth century. The period begins auspiciously with the work of Copernicus and of Vesalius. The new astronomy of Copernicus had implications which led to the development of mathematics, mechanics, and general physics. The astonishing sequence of great names, Tycho Brahe, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, marks the gradual rise of physics,

or "natural philosophy," to its dominating position in the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century. But in its way the heritage of Vesalius, if less spectacular, was no less admirable or important, and it steadily grew into what may be grouped for convenience as the biological sciences. The ideal of accurate observation inspired the work of Vesalius in the field of human anatomy; the same ideal then appears in the study of animals and plants, at first on the level of general observation and classification, but later in the more minute analysis of structure which was made possible by the microscope. Though the limits of time fixed by Dr. Wolf for his work are fairly narrow, there is a vast amount of material to be organized. The first thirteen chapters are concerned mainly with astronomy, mathematics, mechanics, and physics. In the fourth chapter, an account is given of the scientific academies, where the work of Professor Brown has proved useful; but having a more general aim Dr. Wolf deals not only with the Académie of Paris and the Royal Society of London, but also with the Academia del Cimento of Florence and the Berlin Academy. At the same time, he restricts himself to the "new institutions" and "the most important" (p. 54). This is presumably due to the necessity of economizing space, for it would be natural to expect some recognition of other organizations, such as the Académie Française (1635) and the Academia dei Lincei (Rome, 1609), which fall within the period and deserve mention. Perhaps Dr. Wolf considered them too promiscuous to be ranked among scientific societies, and the argument has some merits. Physics and morals were not too sharply divided, as is shown in the account given by Professor Brown of the "conferences" arranged by Renaudot: "in addition to discussion of terms of philosophy, definitions of such words as Entity, Method, Resemblance, First Matter, Cause, one finds elaborate treatment of various topics of popular morality and conduct—Drunkenness, Dancing, Slavery, the education of women, the reading of novels, the character of the French, the social status of trade." Clearly the disease of specialization had not attacked these "curious minds" and perhaps they should not be too strongly reprimanded for discursiveness: the problems of method, cause, national character, and trade are to-day declared to be proper subjects of scientific research.

Returning from this digression to the structure of Dr. Wolf's book, we may note that after the chapters named above (i-xiv)

the subjects discussed are chemistry, geology, geography, the biological sciences, and medicine. Then come four chapters on technology, followed by three on psychology, the social sciences, and philosophy respectively. This list is sufficient proof of the variety of the contents of this book, which ends the story on page 675. It is hardly conceivable that experts in the different fields could not find points on which to disagree with the author. On the other hand, the author cites (p. xxvi) a number of eminent men who have co-operated by advice and suggestions. A reviewer would have to be endowed with more than normal confidence in human powers to suppose that he could adequately criticize any or every part of the volume. It is at least indisputable that the work is a monument of industry and learning; at times it inevitably becomes a catalogue of names and details, but on the whole it is eminently readable and the studies of the more important figures are made with skill and precision. No one should attempt to read a book of this kind continuously: the result is mental indigestion or possibly, for the weaker brethren, complete collapse; but taken in suitable quantities at proper intervals it furnishes an incredible amount of information and, in the best sense, entertainment. It would be ungracious and unjust not to mention the three hundred and sixteen illustrations: the number being stated on the front page, it has not been considered necessary to make a count! These illustrations vary from full-page pictures of places and persons to cuts and diagrams of various sizes representing instruments, "tables," designs, *etc*. Special mention ought to be made of the section on technology, which deals with agriculture, textiles, building, mining, metallurgy, steam-engines, mechanical calculators. The author has shown wisdom in giving adequate space to these subjects. The utilitarian aims of science were part of the robust character of the age which thought "words are feminine, facts masculine," according to the proverb quoted from one of Oldenburg's letters to Boyle by Professor Brown (p. 101). In these chapters there is added to the whole work a sense of the solidity and objectivity of thought, in itself so admirable and in part the peculiar glory of the age. Without sentiment or self-consciousness the great men were serving the cause of humanity and were conscious that the value of their work was equally the "advancement of human convenience" and "the glory of God." The reproductions of the contemporary woodcuts in this section are a special

delight. The crude energy of labour in the (relatively) early days of mining is fitly represented in the strong lines of the drawings which show the construction of shafts, a stamp-mill worked by a water-wheel, windlasses, and suction-pumps. Engines of all kinds are objects specially fitted for pictorial art and in this section there is good entertainment: the ingenuity of Bianca's turbine (p. 546), eminently correct in principle though somewhat lacking in efficiency, represented with the charming irrelevance of an age which insisted upon thrusting human figures into the most severely de-animated machines, well repays careful examination. Admirers of the national cash register of to-day should not miss the ornate beauty of Pascal's calculating machine (Ill. 299) or the more formidable complexity of a device for the same purpose created by Leibniz.

At the end of the procession come the psychologists, social scientists, and philosophers. They are needed to complete the picture. The first two may be described as extravasations of science, tentative overflowings of physiology and arithmetic; for psychology (known as pneumatology also) was a gallant attempt to extend the limits of physiology and connect body with mind, or, as in the case of Descartes for animals and La Mettrie for men, state all the known facts in one set of terms and have no more worry; the social sciences began as "political arithmetic," which shows well enough their genesis and nature. Philosophy also is an inevitable appendage. Were not Descartes, Newton, Leibniz, and some others the outstanding "philosophers" of this or any other age? Bacon and Locke also played their parts, and the list is extended to include such diverse characters as Henry More, Isaac Barrow, Gilbert, and Boyle. This does honour to the flexibility of the title "philosophers," and nothing shall be said here to cast any aspersion on that honourable title. But the most charitable comment to make is that the entanglements of the threads of knowledge defy any clear separation of one approach from another. The philosophers were also men and as men they had to satisfy themselves that the fundamentals were sound; not infrequently they incurred the suspicion of trying to do what the medieval thinker never did, namely, justify the ways of God to man. Perhaps the truly symbolic figure of the age is Spinoza, "an exceptionally skilful maker of lenses" and also creator of a philosophic system which is rooted in a great tradition remote from the manual arts, indifferent to time and place, concerned to see all things in the light of eternity.

For this reason he represents the eternal dualism of human life, bound by necessity to toil and delivered from the necessity of toil by speculation. The contrast between Bacon and Spinoza illuminates the complexity of modern life. The ideal of power, achieved by the conquest of nature and the use of limitless resources, has been partly realized as time goes on. The ideal of universal harmony and peace, described by Spinoza as the logical product of intellectual development, does not seem to make similar progress. The material products of scientific activity, so adequately described by Dr. Wolf, are worthy of the admiration they excite; but even more admirable is the spirit of the men who achieved this work, and hope for the future welfare of mankind seems now to depend less on the multiplication of discoveries than on the universal acceptance of rational principles in conduct.

WOMEN AND FICTION*

M. M. Kirkwood

This book treats of people more than of books about people, and makes literary criticism into a live discussion of social values. Its approach to fiction is like that of Lytton Strachey and André Maurois to biography. Miss Lawrence looks at literature for what it may reveal of the impulses and drives that constitute human nature, and in the writing of women since the time of Mary Wollstonecraft finds a clear thread running, the thread of their dual nature, their economic and biological necessities, their two soul-sides which up to that time convention had called one soul-side. She focusses attention on the feminine dilemma, brought about by feminism, of economic rights gained with human rights lost, of books produced and children unborn, of art promoted and life frustrated. She also forces the reader to consider whether the suffering of women in a mental and moral way, through the suppression of the truth about their dual nature, is necessary in an advanced civilization—any more necessary than the aberrations of genius are necessary as in the case of Swift, or any other miseries which a straightforward study and estimate of human facts might

**The School of Femininity: A Book for and about Women as They are Interpreted through Feminine Writers of Yesterday and Today*, by Margaret Lawrence, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1936.

obviate. The courage of this young author is admirable, for her study derives sincerely from a desire to find and face the truth, whatever the truth may be. And to courage she joins knowledge. Although her work is popular and unsupported by documentation, her reading has evidently been wide; and her conclusions frequently startle by their shrewd insight into facts.

Miss Lawrence's findings are conservative, in spite of indications throughout the work that a relapse into femininity may not be the best wisdom for women to-day. She writes on page 235, "Unless a very rapid result occurs from the use of psychoanalysis among very young women, it does seem that so far as the immediate future is concerned there is little hope of a woman attaining normal love of a man and normal outlet for her own work in the world with any considerable equality"—and on page 345 (though exceptions are admitted), "It may be said with security that it is always tragedy connected with her biological nature which sends a young woman to writing." If one reads these statements in conjunction with the sentences on page 193, "Nature created women normally incapable of happiness in companionship with men weaker than themselves," one may suspect the author of wishing to please the reactionary reader by keeping her eye on the woman of romantic fiction, rather than on the working woman who through generations has had to balance her activities amid the varying calls of life and to give and take in her biological relations. Actually the extra-domestic work of women, and the unequal powers of men in relation to women and of women in relation to men, are features of the life of certain groups in our own society to-day without causing detriment to happiness, as well as having been features of primitive and high cultures in other lands and times. The real point to be made, it would seem, is that as economic and social shifts occur, the critical members of the civilization concerned should help to create in the generations as they are born such attitudes as would tend to emphasize and preserve the human values already developed, instead of insisting that social change always destroys value. Miss Lawrence's book in its general effect does create such attitudes in the reader, as may be illustrated in the following passage where she discusses Katharine Mansfield and Willa Cather: "Both in Mansfield and Cather, women are not creatures to be studied as new creatures just emerging from subjection. They are ordinary human beings linked with men through the need of men and women for

each other for the making of the race. Neither of them tells a sexual story. Both of them take sex for granted, and go on to the real story of life, the struggle of the spirit in its earth environment." This is good social criticism and it is good literary criticism.

It is for its good literary criticism that the book should finally be praised, for Miss Lawrence offers real estimates, as well as historical estimates, of the writing of women. Although her treatment of the woman question is always thought-provoking, it is when she forgets this "pattern of thought" and writes of literature as literature that she writes best. Much of what she says about Jane Austen is just assessment of a perfect art (although unhappily Miss Austen's immortal Bennets appear as Bennetts). Discerning appreciation is also given of "Elizabeth," of Mary Webb, of Clemence Dane, and Virginia Woolf, as well as of the work of Katharine Mansfield and Willa Cather. It is a proof of the author's live quality that the reader looks in vain among her sophisticates and "artistes" (one regrets this word), for Rebecca West. One would greatly have liked to hear Miss Lawrence's estimate of that incisive modern. For Miss Lawrence is always clear and always suggestive, and pricks the reader into a sharp consciousness of what he or she may think of this or that woman writer, by her invariably individual and invariably convinced criticism. Our reaction is sympathetic when George Eliot is her subject, almost tenderly esteemed. It is antithetic when, with her quick response to contemporary work she writes that Katharine Brush could not write a poor story. If, however, there is a relaxing of taste in the second half of *The School of Femininity*, it is a generous fault, due to the author's desire to show the wide scope of women's work in the art of modern fiction.

Miss Lawrence writes an animated and telling prose. She has a feeling for words and, more important, the quality of experience in phrase and statement. She always remembers her audience, which accounts, doubtless, for the most striking feature of her style—the tendency to break into apparent sentences separate bits of statement, so that each idea may be easily grasped. This writing is as easy to follow as conversation, and popular for that reason. It is also amusing, adopting for its special purposes the colloquialisms of American talk ("it is just too bad" occurs three times before page 33) as well as the patter of advertisement and of popular psychology. None of this should obscure the serious object of the

style, which is to bring home to the reader, by hook or by crook, the vital implications of the subject treated. The upshot is an extremely original and vigorous piece of work.

ENGLAND IN TRANSITION*

EDGAR MCINNIS

To anyone who ponders upon the development of the world during the past sixty years, a most disquieting thought is likely to present itself. It is that the allotted span of human life, brief though it seems in many aspects, is probably under modern conditions far too long for the public good. When one measures the significance of threescore years and ten by the changes that take place during that period, the strain upon human adaptability becomes a little frightening. And when one reflects, not merely that the outlook of men now governing England was moulded in the heyday of Salisbury and Chamberlain, but that there are men in active public positions who have clear memories of the Second Reform Bill and the Franco-Prussian War, it is surely not ungracious to suggest that even the wisdom of long experience may not be a complete substitute for that freshness of outlook which is so urgently needed in this rapidly changing world.

Something of the drastic nature of those changes is studied in this volume by Mr. Ensor. It is the second volume to appear in the projected fourteen-volume "Oxford History of England," and will take its place at the end of the completed series. Its scope is the period from 1870 to 1914; and though the time thus covered is less than half a century, it is one so full of vital struggles and fundamental problems that it may justly be regarded in perspective as one of the critical periods in English history.

The period, says Mr. Ensor in his introduction, may be viewed in at least five different lights. It saw the rapid extension of the democratic principle already inaugurated by the first two Reform Bills. It saw "the conversion of the English as a whole into a school-taught and literate people." It saw the final ruin of English agriculture, and the first faint menace to English industrial supremacy. Finally, it witnessed the reassertion of Britain's imperial

*_England, 1870-1914_, by R. C. K. Ensor, Oxford University Press, 1936.

destiny which was to have such remarkable political significance—and also such fateful consequences.

But these features, as Mr. Ensor recognizes, are not exhaustive; and perhaps not all of them are salient. Behind them lies one single dominant theme—the struggle of England to find a new orientation, urged on by desperate necessity. This was a development which nothing at the opening of the period seemed to foreshadow. For twenty years England had enjoyed a full-blooded self-confidence born of a swelling material prosperity. Class struggles were in abeyance. The revolt of Chartism had been succeeded by the moderation of Trade Unionism. The struggle between the landed and industrial interests had ended in the grudging acceptance of the new middle-class supremacy. "Peace, retrenchment, and reform" were the accepted watchwords of the nation; and the reforms of Gladstone's first ministry, however Disraeli and the Tories might fulminate, were on the whole the acceptable embodiment of the national desires.

But they marked the end of an era. With the depression of the seventies, the country found itself faced with a new and unforeseen situation. It found that its international position and its relation to the rest of the world had profoundly altered; it found that, partly as a result of the new democracy, the balance in domestic politics had entirely changed. New forces were beginning to stir; new classes were intruding their perturbing demands into public life. Cross-currents were setting in that were to grow steadily more turbulent as the period advanced. It is the emergence and the increasing clash of these conflicting forces that forms the story of these forty-four years.

On the political side, the significance of this development lies in the steady movement towards divisions on class lines. The emergence of the Labour party is only one symptom of this. Mr. Ensor recognizes the changes it brought about in the bases of the old parties, though he does not fully analyse the nature of those changes. He also brings out with admirable clarity the manner in which the House of Lords rallied to their class interests, and abandoned their former caution in favour of a reckless policy of obstruction which threatened to revolutionize the whole nature of the parliamentary system and led straight to the crisis of 1909. And behind these developments lay the fundamental and unsolved problems of the national economy which found expression in both

the political and the intellectual ferment of the early twentieth century.

This book is an admirable summary of the events to which these factors gave rise. We have long been in need of a volume which would summarize the mass of important information which has come out in the past few years. Mr. Ensor's volume supplies that need. It is a careful and detailed study of political events, which shows a considerable appreciation of the importance of cultural and economic factors in the history of the period. Without doubt it will stand as the authoritative treatment of this period for a considerable time to come.

That is not to say that it is without its defects. Any study of this sort presents the author with the problem of selection, and opens him to resultant criticism on the grounds of arrangement and emphasis. In this case the disagreement will be largely a personal matter between Mr. Ensor and the individual reader. I myself feel that even the important place he allots to Chamberlain's early political career does not fully bring out the nature of Chamberlain's radicalism and its relation to the vital needs of the time, nor does he emphasize sufficiently the tragic effect of the Home Rule controversy in checking this essential development for another twenty years. His attitude towards labour problems, towards imperial expansion, and towards Anglo-German relations, while marked by a conscious effort at fairness, will still offer grounds for disagreement. And his chapters on economic and social developments, interesting and informative as they are, leave the impression of a need for a more acute probing, if the nature of English life and English problems is to be fully understood. But an author in the end has to conform to the limitations of space and can justly plead for some latitude in his judgment. I think his judgment has failed more than once; but it would be doing a grave injustice to an extremely useful book to insist that the author should have written a completely different one.